

A
NEW HISTORY
OF THE
HOLY BIBLE,
FROM THE
BEGINNING OF THE WORLD,
TO THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY,
WITH

ANSWERS to most of the Controverted Questions,
Dissertations upon the most remarkable Passages,
and a Connection of Profane History all along.

To which are added,
NOTES, explaining difficult Texts, rectifying Mistranslations,
and reconciling seeming Contradictions.

The whole illustrated with proper Maps and Sculptures.

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T H E H I S T O R Y O F T H E B I B L E.

B O O K IV. Continued.

C H A P. III.

*From the Death of Korah, to the Israelites Entrance, into
Canaan. In all 38 Years.*

The H I S T O R Y.

AFTER the establishment of the high-priest's office in Aaron, and his family, the Israelites moved about, from place to place, in the deserts of Arabia, but chiefly about the mountains of Idumæa, until God, * by shortening the period of human life, had taken away almost all that generation, (a) of whom he had sworn in his wrath (as the Psalmist expresses it) that they

A. M. 2515, &c.
Ant. Christ. 1489, &c.
from Numb, xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy.

The Israelites sojourning in the wilderness.

* After the many judgments and calamities sent upon Israel, by reason of their rebellions against God, Moses perceiving the divine threatenings to be daily accomplished by the frequent deaths of those who came out of Egypt; and whose carcases were to fall in the wilderness, composed the ninetieth psalm, wherein he mentions the reduction of human life to the term of years wherein it has ever since stopped, and makes several wholesome reflections thereupon: *The days of our age are threescore years and ten; and though men be so strong, that they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone. O teach us therefore to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom!* ver. 10, 12.

(a) Psal. xcvi. 11.

A. M. 2515, etc. *should not enter into his rest.* And indeed good reason had he to be angry with them, since, during the remainder of their peregrination, they were guilty of many more murders and idolatries, than Moses has thought proper to record, which are nevertheless mentioned, with no small severity, (b) by other inspired writers.

And, agreeing with the King of Arad. As the time however for their entrance into the Holy Land now drew near, from Ezion Geber they advanced towards Kadesh in the wilderness of Sin, designing very probably to enter the country through those narrow passages, which, at that time, were called *the ways of the spies*; but (c) they were repulsed by the King of Arad, who, coming out against them with a strong force, slew a considerable number, and took from them much booty. In their second attempt however they succeeded better; for they defeated the King's army, sacked some of his towns, and vowing at another opportunity († which happened in the time of (d) Joshua) the utter destruction of the whole nation, they took their rout for the present another way, and so arrived again at Kadesh.

(b) Vid. Amos v. 26.; Ezek. and Psal. passim; Acts vii. 43. (c) Numb. xxi. 1, 11.

† The Jews have a tradition, founded on an express text in Deuteronomy, chap. xx. 10, &c.), that the Israelites were obliged to send an herald to offer peace in their name, to every city and people, before they attempted to conquer them by the sword; that, in case they accepted it, they only became tributaries to them; but if they refused their offer, they were then to be vowed to destruction. Maimonides has taken great pains to prove, that all those nations which were cut off by the Israelites, owed their destruction to their chusing to try the fortune of war, rather than accept of peace upon such terms. There is one objection, however, that seems to stand a little in his way, and that is,—the stratagem which the Gibeonites made use of to obtain peace from Israel, which would have been needless, had the latter been obliged to offer it before they began to any hostilities: But to this the learned Rabbi answers,—That the reason of the Gibeonites policy was, that they had, in common with their neighbours, refused the first offer of peace, and were consequently doomed to the same fate with them; and that, for the prevention of this, their ambassadors feigned themselves to come from a country vastly distant from any of the other seven, and by that means obtained the desired peace; *Maimon. ap. Cuncæm; et Basnag. Rep. Heb. tom. 1. lib. 2. c. 20.*

(d) Josh. xxii. 14.

Here

Ch. III. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 3

Here it was that Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, (* who was older than either of them), in the hundred and thirty-third year of her age died, was buried with great pomp, and by the Israelites lamented for the space of a whole month. Here it was, that the people fell again into their old way of murmuring for want of water, which God ordered Moses to supply, by speaking only to a certain rock; but some way or other, he, deviating from his instructions, either through impatience, or diffidence, offended God to such a degree, as to deserve a denunciation, that neither he, nor his brother Aaron (who seems to have been equally in the offence) should be permitted to enter into Canaan. Hence likewise it was, that Moses sent an embassy to the king of Edom, desiring a free passage through his country, and promising to commit no hostilities, nor give the least molestation to any of his subjects. But the haughty Edomite was so far from granting his request, that he came out with a strong army to oppose him; which Moses, no doubt, would have resented as the thing deserved, had not God (whom he consulted upon this occasion) ordered him for the present, not to engage with the Edomites: So that, decamping from Kadesh, he came to mount Hor, not far from the borders of Edom, where God gave Aaron notice of his approaching death, and not long after, commanded Moses to take him, and Eleazar his son, (who was to succeed him in the office of the high-priest), to the top of the mount, and there to strip Aaron of his sacerdotal robes, and put them upon his son; which,

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.
The death
of Miriam,
Moses's of-
fence, and
Aaron's
death.

* Miriam was older than either Aaron or Moses, Moses was the youngest: And when he was born, she might probably be about twelve years of age, because when he was exposed upon the banks of the river Nile, she, we find, had address enough to offer her service to Pharaoh's daughter, to go and fetch her a nurse, which can hardly be supposed of one younger. Some of the ancient fathers are of opinion, that she died a virgin, and was the legislatrix or governess of the Jewish women, as Moses was of the men; but the more probable opinion is, that she was married to Hur, a man of chief note in the tribe of Judah, and on several occasions a person of great confidence with Moses; but it does not appear that she had any children by him. She was buried, as Josephus tells us, with great solemnity, at the charge of the public, and her sepulchre (as Eusebius reports) was extant in his time at Kadesh, not far distant from the city Perteia, the metropolis of Arabia Petræa; *Universal History*, l. 1. c. 7.; and *Calmet's Dictionary*.

when

A. M. when Moses had done, Aaron || died on the top of mount
 2515, &c. Hor, being an hundred and twenty three years old; and
 Ant. Chris. 1489, &c. when the people understood that he was dead, * they be-
 from Num. xlviii. to the wailed him thirty days.

As
 end of Deu- || The mount Hor was on the coast of the land of Edom to-
 teronomy. wards the east, in some part of that tract, which was afterwards

denoted by the mount Seir. In Deuteronomy ii. 12. we are told expressly, that the Horims dwelt in Seir before-time; and accordingly we read, Gen. xiv. 6, that Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, with his confederates, smote the Horites in their mount Seir. Now it seems very probable, that as places at first were wont to take their names from their inhabitants, both this place, and the people might derive their names from one Hor, whom they descended from, and who, in the early ages of the world, inhabited this country; and that tho', in process of time, the name of mount Seir came to be used to denote the same tract, yet the old name of mount Hor was preserved in that part of it, where stood the mountain here so called by Moses, and on which Aaron died. There seems to be however no small difficulty in reconciling this passage in Numb. xx. 23.—28. with what we read in Deut. x. 6, *That the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth, of the children of Jaakan, to Mosera: There Aaron died, and there he was buried.* So that Moses seems to have forgot himself, when in one place he tells us, that his brother Aaron was buried on mount Hor, and in another in Mosera. To reconcile this, some have supposed, that mount Hor was so near to Mosera, where the Israelites had their encampment when Aaron died, that either place might, with propriety enough, be called the place of his death and his interment. It seems, however; from the account which we have of their encampments, in Num. xxxiii. very plain, that mount Hor and Mosera were two distinct places; and therefore others have maintained, that the sixth and seventh verses in the tenth chapter of Deuteronomy, in the common Hebrew text, have been extremely corrupted by the ignorance of some transcribers, because the Hebrew Samaritan, or old Hebrew text, makes the account, in Deut. x. 6, 7. exactly agree with the order of the encampments, mentioned in Numb. xxxiii. 32, 38. and there it is said, that Aaron died, and was buried in mount Hor; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2.

* The author of Ecclesiasticus, having given us a long commendation of Aaron, and his vestments, comes at last to tell us, that " God chose him out of all men living, to offer sacrifices to the Lord; incense, and a sweet savour, for a memorial, " and to make reconciliation for his people; that he gave unto " him the commandments and authority in the statutes of judgments, that he should teach Jacob the testimonies, and inform

" Israel

Chap. III. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 5

As soon as the days of mourning were over, they removed, and encamped at Zalmanah, which took its name from the image of the serpent, which Moses caused to be set up there. For the Israelites, being tired with the length of their journey, the narrowness of their passes, and the barrenness of the country, began to relapse into their old humour of murmuring and repining, which provoked God to send great * swarms of fiery serpents among them; ^{A. M. 2515, &c. Ant. Christ. 1489, &c. from Num. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy. The brazen serpent set them; &c.}

“ Israel in the laws ; that strangers conspired together against him, and maligned him in the wilderness—this the Lord saw, and it displeased him, and, in his wrathful indignation, they were consumed :—But he made Aaron more honourable, and gave him an heritage, and divided unto him the first fruits of the increase ; so that he did eat the sacrifices of the Lord, which he gave unto him and to his seed,” &c.

He died in the arms of Moses his brother, and Eleazar his son, and successor in the high-priesthood. They buried him in some cave belonging to mount Hor, and kept the place of his interment from the knowledge of the Israelites, perhaps from an apprehension, that, in after-ages, they might pay some superstitious worship to him ; or rather, that the Arabians, among whom they then dwelt, might not at any time take it in their heads to violate the sanctity of his grave ; *Eccclus.* xlv. 13. &c.

* Some authors are of opinion, that these serpents were only little worms, which bred in the skin, and were of so venomous a nature, that they immediately poisoned those who were infected by them. But it is evident, that not only the original words, *Necashim Seraphim*, signify a *burning* or *winged serpent*, but that these creatures are very common both in Egypt and Arabia, insomuch that there would be no living in those countries, if these serpents had not by providence been debarred from multiplying, as other serpents do. For the Arabians tell us, that after they have coupled together, the female never fails to kill the male, and that her young ones kill her, as soon as they are hatched. Herodotus, who had seen several of these serpents, tells us, that they very much resemble those which the Greeks and Latins call *Hydræ*; and Bochart has quoted a great number both of ancient and modern authors to prove, that they really are the *Hydræ*. They are but short, are spotted with divers colours, and have wings like those of a Bat. The Ibis is their mortal enemy : And Herodotus tells us, that at Butos in Egypt, he had seen a vast quantity of their skeletons, whose flesh these birds had devoured. They love sweet smells, frequent such trees as bear spices, and the marshes, where the aromatic reed (or cassia) grows; and therefore, when the Arabians go to gather the cassia

A. M. 2515, etc. Ant. Christ. 1489, etc. from Num. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy.

them; but after the death of several, and upon the humiliation of the rest, he commanded Moses to cast a * brazen serpent, of the same size and figure with those that infested them, and to fix it upon a pole, situate on some eminent ground, that as many as were bitten by the living serpents, might look up to the brazen one, and be healed. Which accordingly was done, and had its intended miraculous effect.

The Israelites overcome Sihon and Og, and seize on their country.

Several were the marches and encampments which the Israelites, without committing the least hostilities, made between the countries of Moab and Ammon, till they came at length to the country of the Amorites. And from hence Moses || sent ambassadors to Sihon their king, demanding a passage through his country, and offering to pay for all manner of necessities, without giving him the

cashia, they cloath themselves with skins and cover all their heads over, except their eyes, because their biting is very dangerous; *Bochart, De animal. sacr. part 2. lib. 3. c. 13.*

* This brazen serpent continued among the Jews above seven hundred years, even to the time of Hezekiah king of Judah; but when it came to be made an object of idolatry, and the people for some time had paid their incense and adoration to it, that pious prince caused it to be broken in pieces; and, by way of contempt, called it *Nebushtan*, that is to say, *a brazen bawble*, or *trifle*. At Milan, however, in the church of St. Ambrose, they pretend to shew you a serpent made of brass, which they tell you is the same with that of Moses. But every one may believe of this as he pleases; *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Serpent*.

|| It may here be proposed as a difficulty, how Moses came to offer the Amorites terms of peace, considering that the Israelites were commanded to destroy them, and to take possession of their country. But to this it has been answered by some learned men, that notwithstanding God had expressly doomed this people to an extermination, yet Moses thought himself at liberty to indulge his usual meekness, and to begin with gentle and amicable measures, though he might at the same time be persuaded, that they would avail nothing; and this probably at the suggestion of God himself, to cut off all occasions or pretence of complaint from the Amorites, as if they had not been honourably and fairly dealt with, and that the equity and righteousness of God's proceeding with a prince of so savage and obstinate a temper, might appear in a stronger light, when the consequence of his refusing a free passage to the Israelites, and bringing his army into the field against them, should happen to be his own defeat and destruction; *Bibliotheca Bibl. on Numb. xxi. 21.*

Chap. III. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 7

least disturbance. But † the Amorite prince, not thinking it safe to receive so numerous a people into the heart of his kingdom, not only denied them a passage, but accounting it better policy to attack, than to be attacked, gathered what forces he could together, and marched out to give them battle. But not far from Jahaz, where the engagement was, the Israelites overthrew him; and having made themselves masters of his country, put all, both man, woman, and child, to the sword: and not long after this, Og, † king of Bashan, † a man of a prodigious gigantic size,

A. M.
2515, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1489, etc.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

† Grotius (in his second book *De jure belli et pacis*, cap. 2. sect. 13) is of opinion, that according to the law of nations, the highways, seas, and rivers of every country, ought to be free to all passengers upon just occasions. He produces several examples from Heathen history of such permission being granted to armies, and thence he infers, that Sihon and Og, denying the Israelites this privilege, gave a just ground of war; nor does he think that the fear which these princes might conceive, is any excuse at all for not granting the thing, because no man's fear can take away another man's right, especially when several ways might have been found out to have made their passage safe on both sides. But when all is said, it seems not clear, that all men have such a right as this great man thinks they may claim. No man, we know, can challenge a passage through a private man's ground without his leave; and every prince has the same dominion in all his territories, that a private man has in his land. As for the examples therefore of those who had permitted armies to pass through their kingdoms, they are examples of fact, rather than of right, and of such as were not in a condition to refuse what was demanded of them. For the thing is notorious, that several countries have suffered very grievously by granting this liberty; and therefore no prince, who consults his subjects safety, is to be blamed for not granting it; nor was the war with the Amorites founded upon this reason, as we shall see hereafter; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The land of Bashan was one of the most fertile cantons of Canaan, which reached on the east to the river Jordan, on the west to the mountains of Gilead, on the south to the brook Jabock, and on the north to the land of Gethur. The whole kingdom took its name from the hill of Bashan, which is situate in it, and has since been called *Battanea*. It had no less than sixty walled towns in it, besides villages. It afforded an excellent breed of cattle, and stately oaks, and was in short a plentiful and populous country; *Universal history*, lib. 1. c. 7.

† The description of this gigantic king, who was the last of the race of the Rephaims, or vast prodigious men, we have in

The History of the BIBLE, Book IV.

A. M. size, attempting to obstruct their passage, underwent the same fate. For they seized his country, and utterly destroyed the inhabitants thereof, reserving only the cattle, and spoil of the cities, as a prey to themselves, as they had done before in the case of Sihon.

Encouraged by these successes, the Israelites marched to the plains of Moab, and encamped on the banks of the river Jordan, opposite to Jericho. This put Balak (who was then king of Moab) into a terrible consternation: for supposing himself not able to engage the mighty force of Israel, he had not only made a strong alliance with the Midianites and Ammonites, his neighbours, in order to stop their progress, but thought it adviseable likewise, before he began any hostilities against them, to try how far the power of Balaam's enchantments (a noted magician in Pethor, a city of Mesopotamia) might go, in turning the fortune of the war towards his side.

To this purpose he dispatched a select number of his nobles, with costly presents, to || Balaam, intreating him in the king's name to come, and curse him a people who

Deuteronomy iii. 11. and from the size of his bed, (which was preserved a long time in the city of Rabbal, the capital of the Ammonites, we may guess at his stature. It was nine cubits long, and four cubits broad, *i. e.* fifteen feet four inches and a half long, and six feet ten inches broad. But the Jewish doctors, not content with such pigmy wonders, have improved the story to their own liking. For they tell us, that this bed of nine cubits could be no more than his cradle, since himself was six score cubits high, when full grown; that he lived before the flood, and that the waters of it, when at the highest, reached only up to his knees; that however he thought proper to get upon the top of the roof of the ark, where Noah supplied him with provision, not out of any compassion to him, but that the men who came after the deluge, might see how great the power of God was, who had destroyed such monsters from the face of the earth; *Calmet and Munster in Deut. chap. 3.*

|| In 2 Pet. chap. 2. ver. 15. Balaam is said to be the son of Bosor, according to our version; but as the words, *the son*, are not found in the original, but were inserted by the translators to supply the sense, as they imagined, the word *Bosor* may denote a *place*; as well as a *person*; and accordingly Grotius understands St. Peter's words, not as if *Bosor* was the *father*, but the city of *Balaam*: for what was anciently called *Pethor*, the Syrians in after ages called *Bosor*, by an easy change of two letters, which is a thing not unusual; *Universal history, lib. 1. c. 7.*

Chap. III. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c.

were arrived-upon the borders of his territories ; but God, A. M. 2515. etc. Ant. Curi 1489, etc. from Num xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy. for that time, would not permit him to go : whereupon Balak, supposing either that the number and quality of his messengers did not answer Balaam's ambition, or the value of the presents his covetousness, sent messengers, of a more honourable rank, with larger proposals, and promises of high promotion, if he would but gratify him in this one thing.

(e) *Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness* ; and therefore, blinded with this passion, he addressed God for leave to go ; which God in his anger granted, but under such restriction, as would necessarily hinder all his fascinations from doing the Israelites any harm. Balaam's journey and behaviour when he arrived.

With this permission he set forward with the princes of Moab ; but as he was on the road, an angel met him, whom (tho' he perceived him not) his ass plainly saw, and therefore turned aside into the field to avoid him. With much ado, Balaam beat his ass into the road again ; but when the angel stood in a narrow passage between two walls, which inclosed a vineyard, the ass for fear ran against one of the walls, and crushed Balaam's leg, which provoked him so, that he beat him again. At last, the angel removed, and stood in a place so very narrow, that there was no possibility of getting by him, whereupon the ass fell down under his rider, and would go no farther. This enraged the prophet still more ; and as he was beating and belabouring the poor creature most unmercifully, God was pleased to give the ass the faculty of speech, wherein he expostulated the hard usage he had met with ; and as Balaam was going to justify himself, he was likewise pleased to open the prophet's eyes, and let him see the angel standing in the way with a naked sword in his hand, which so terrified him, that he fell down upon his face, asked pardon for his trespass, and offered to return home again, if so be his journey was displeasing to God.

That his journey was displeasing to God, he himself could not be ignorant, because, in his first address, God had expressly interdicted his going. Being resolved, however, out of the man's wicked inclination, to raise some kind of advantage, and to make him, who was hired to curse, the instrument of pronouncing a blessing upon his people, God gave him now free leave to proceed. When Balak understood that Balaam was on the road, himself went to receive him upon the confines of his dominions ;

(e) 2 Pet. ii. 15.

A. M.
2515, etc.
Ant. Chri.
1489, etc.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

and having, in a friendly manner, blamed him for not coming at his first sending, which Balaam excused upon account of the restraint which God had laid on him, he conducted him to his capital city, and there entertained him publicly, with his princes and nobles that day; and the next morning carried him to the high places, consecrated to * Baal, that from thence he might take a view of the extremity of the Israelitish camp. Whilst they were here, the prophet ordered † seven altars to be erected, and seven oxen, and

* The word *Baal* signifies *Lord*, and was the name of several gods, both male and female, as Selden (*De Diis Syris, c. 1.*) shews. The god of the Moabites was Chemosh, but here very probably is called by the common name of *Baal*. And as all nations worshipped their gods upon high places, so this god of Moab, having more places of worship than one, Balak carried Balaam to them all, that from thence he might take the most advantageous prospect of the Israelites. These high places were full of trees, and shady groves, which made them commodious both for the solemn thoughts and prayers of such as were devout, and for the filthy inclinations and abominable practices of such as affected to be wicked; *Patrick's Commentary*,

† According to the account which both Festus and Servius give us of ancient times, the Heathens sacrificed to the celestial gods only upon altars: to the terrestrial, they sacrificed upon the earth; and to the infernal in holes digged in the earth. And though the number seven was much observed among the Hebrews, even by God's own appointment, *Levit. iv. 6.* yet we do not read of more than one altar built by the patriarchs when they offered their sacrifices, nor were any more than one allowed by Moses: And therefore we may well suppose, that there was something of Heathen superstition in this erection of seven altars, and that the Moabites, in the worship of the sun (who is here principally meant by Baal), did at the same time sacrifice to the seven planets. This was originally a part of the Egyptian theology; for as they worshipped at this time the lights of heaven, so they first imagined the seven days of the week to be under the respective influence of these seven luminaries. Belus, and his Egyptian priests, having obtained leave to settle in Babylon, about half a century before this time, might teach the Chaldeans their astronomy, and so introduce this Egyptian notion of the influence of the seven ruling stars, which Balaam, being no stranger to the learning of the age and country he lived in, might pretend to Balak to proceed upon in his divinations and auguries; *Cleric's Commentary in locum*; and *Shuckford's Connexions, vol. 3. lib. 12.*

seven

seven rams to be got ready ; and having * offered an ox and a ram on each altar, he left Balak to stand by the sacrifices, while himself withdrew to consult the Lord ; and upon his return, acquainted the King, “ How impossible it was for him to do the thing that he might expect from him, viz. the cursing a people who were so signally under the protection of Heaven ; and so magnifying their prosperity and increase, he concludes with a wish, that his fate might be theirs, both in life and death.”

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.
from Numb.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

Balak, at these words, expressed no small surprise ; but still not discouraged, he hoped that the change of the place might possibly produce some better luck ; and therefore taking Balaam to the top of Mount Pisgah, he tried whether he might not be permitted to curse them from thence. But all in vain. The same number of altars were erected, the bullocks and rams were offered, and the prophet withdrew to consult God, as before ; but still he returned with no better news : For the purport of his declaration was, “ That God was fixed and immutable in his favour to the Israelites ; that he would not suffer any bloody designs, or any frauds or enchantments to prevail against them, but would finally make them victorious, wherever they came.”

This was so great a mortification to Balak, that, to silence Balaam, he forbade him either to curse or bless ; but he soon changed his mind, and desired him to make a farther trial at another place. Accordingly another place was made choice of. Fresh altars were raised, and fresh

* In the text it is said, that Balak and Balaam *offered on every altar a bullock and a ram*, Numb. xxiii. 2. But though it was customary, in those early days, for kings to officiate as priests, yet it is rather to be supposed, that Balak only presented the sacrifices, and that Balaam performed the office of sacrificing them ; but then it may be made a question, to whom the sacrifices were offered. And to this it may be answered, that they might both have a different intention ; that Balak might supplicate Baal, while Balaam was making his addresses to the Lord ; though with such superstitious ceremonies, as it is likely were used by the worshippers of Baal. Or why may not we suppose, that Balaam, telling Balak, that he could effect nothing without the Lord, the God of Israel persuaded him to join with him at that time in his worship, that they might more powerfully prevail with him to withdraw his presence from the Israelites ? For there is no reason to imagine, that Balaam would go to *inquire of the Lord*, immediately after he had sacrificed to other gods ; *Patrik's Commentary*.

A. M. sacrifices offered ; but all to no purpose : Balaam perceiving
 2515, &c. that God was resolved to continue blessing Israel, without
 Ant. Christ. retiring, as aforesometimes, under pretence of consulting God,
 1489, &c. at the first cast of his eye upon the tents of the Israelites,
 from Numb. brake out into ejaculations of praise ; and then, in proper
 xviii. to the and significant metaphors, foretold their extent, fertility,
 end of Deu- and strength, and that *those that blessed them, should be bless-*
 teronomy. *ed, and those that cursed them should be cursed.*

His prophe-
 cies con-
 cerning the
 Israelites.

By this time Balak, enraged to hear Balaam, whom he had sent for to curse the children of Israel, thus three times successively bless them, could no longer contain himself, but smiting his hands together, he bade him haste and be gone, since, by his foolish adherence to God's suggestions, he had both abused him, and defrauded himself.

* Balaam had recourse to his old excuse, of not daring to transcend the divine commands ; but being willing to gratify the king, and in compliance to his covetous temper, to gain some reward to himself, he offered to advertise him of what the Israelites would do to his people in subsequent ages ; but still (against his own inclination), he bestowed blessings on Israel, and prophesied, " That a star
 " should come forth from Jacob, and a rod from Israel ;
 " that it should smite the chiefs of Moab, and destroy the
 " children of Seth ; that Edom should fall under its power ;
 " and that the Amalekites and Kenites should be extirpated :
 " In fine, that the western nations, the Greeks and Romans,

* Josephus brings in Balaam making his apology for himself, in order to pacify Balak's rage, for his having blessed the Israelites, instead of cursing them. " And does King Balak think,
 " that where prophets are upon the subject of fatalities, or things
 " to come, they are left to their own liberty, what to say, and
 " what not, or to make their own speeches ? We are only the
 " passive instruments of the oracle. The words are put in our
 " mouths ; and we neither think nor know what we say. I re-
 " member well, says he, that I was invited hither with great
 " earnestness, both by yourself and by the Midianites ; and that
 " it was at your request I came, and with a desire to do all that
 " in me lay, for your service. But what am I able to do against
 " the will and power of God ? I had not the least thought of
 " speaking one good word of the Israelites army, or of the bles-
 " sings which God hath in store for them ; but since God has
 " decreed to make them great and happy, I have been forced to
 " speak, as you have heard, instead of what I had otherwise
 " designed to say ;" *Jewish Antiq. lib. 4. cap. 6.*

" should

" should vanquish the Assyrians, destroy the Hebrews, and perish themselves." A. M. 2515, etc.

After these predictions, as if vexed at his own disappointment in missing the reward he expected, and with a purpose to revenge himself on the Israelites, as the occasion of it, he instructed the Moabites and Midianites in a wicked * device; which was to send their daughters into the camp of the Israelites, in order to draw them first into lewdness, and then into idolatry, the sure method to deprive them of the assistance of that God who protected them. This artifice succeeded; (for the very next account we have of the Israelites, is, that they lay encamped at Shittim, where many of them † were deluded by these strange women, not only to commit whoredom with them, but to assist at their

Ant. Christ. 1489, etc, from Numb. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy. The Israelites commit whoredom and idolatry with strange women, and are punished for it.

* Though Moses makes no mention of this contrivance, where he describes the interview between Balaam and Balak; yet in the 31st chapter of Numbers, ver. 16. he lays the whole blame upon Balaam: and Josephus accordingly informs us, that after he had gone as far as the river Euphrates, he bethought himself of this project, and having sent for Balak and the princes of Midian, he thus addressed himself to them. "To the end that King Balak, says he, and you the princes of Midian, may know the great desire I have to please you, though, in some sort, against the will of God; I have thought of an expedient, that may perhaps be for your service. Never flatter yourselves that the Hebrews are to be destroyed by wars, pestilence, famine, or any other of these common calamities; for they are so secure under God's special providence, that they are never totally to be extinguished by any of these depopulating judgments: But if any small and temporary advantage against them will give you any satisfaction, hearken to my advice. Send into their camp a procession of the loveliest virgins you can pick up; and to improve nature, dress them up with all the ornaments of art, and give them their lessons how to behave themselves upon all occasions of courtship and amour. If the young men shall make love, and proceed to any importunities, let them threaten immediately to be gone, unless they will actually renounce their country's laws, and the honour of that God who prescribed them, and finally engage themselves to worship after the manner of the Midianites and Moabites. This, says he, will provoke God, and draw vengeance upon their heads;" *Jewish Antiq. ibid.*

† The Jewish doctors tell us, that on a great festival, which the Moabites made in honour of their god Baal Peor, some Israelites who happened to be there, casting their eyes upon their young women, were smitten with their beauty, and court-

A. M. their sacrifices, and worship their gods, even * Baal-peor),
 2515, &c. and was a crime so detestable to God, that he punished it
 Ant. Christ. with a plague, which, in a short time, carried off || about
 1489, &c. twenty-four thousand of the offenders. This however
 from Numb. was not the only punishment which God exacted : For he
 xviii. to the
 end of Deu-
 teronomy.

ed their enjoyment ; but that the women would not yield to their motion, upon any other condition, than that they would worship their gods. Whereupon pulling a little image of Peor out of their bosom, they presented it to the Israelites to kiss, and then desired them to eat of the sacrifices, which had been offered to him. But Josephus tells the story otherwise, viz. That the women, upon some pretence or other, came into the Israelitish camp, and when they had enamoured the young Hebrews, according to their instructions, they made a pretence as though they must be gone ; but upon passionate intreaties, accompanied with vows and oaths on the other side, the subtle inchantresses consented to stay with them and grant them every thing that they desired, upon condition that they would embrace their religion ; *Patrick's Commentary* ; and *Josephus, ibid.*

* The Jewish doctors are generally of opinion, that this Baal-Peor was the same with Priapus, the idol of Turpitude ; and that the worship of him consisted in such obscene practices, or postures at least, as were not fit to be named. Others have asserted, that this god was the same with Saturn, a deity adored in Arabia ; nor is it unlikely, that the adventure related of Saturn, and his castration by his own son, may have introduced the obscenities that are practised in the worship of this idol. But others, with great assurance, maintain, that Peor was the same with Adonis, whose feasts were celebrated in the manner of funerals, but the people who observed them at that time, committed a thousand dissolute actions, particularly when they were told, that Adonis, whom they had mourned for as dead, was returned to life again. However this be it is very probable, that as Peor was the name of a mountain in the country of Moab, the temple of Baal stood upon it, and thence he was called *Baal-peor* ; *Calmet's Commentaries and Dissertations* ; *Patrick's Commentary* ; and *Selden De Diis Syriis.*

|| St. Paul, in his observation upon the judgments which befel the Israelites in the wilderness, tells us expressly, that the number of those who were cut off in this plague was no more than *three and twenty thousand*, 1 Cor. x. 8. Whereas Moses makes them no less than *four and twenty thousand*. But this difference is easily reconciled, if we do but consider that in the *four and twenty thousand*, which Moses computes, the thousand who were convicted of idolatry, and thereupon were slain with the sword, *in the day of the plague*, (Numb. xxv. 5. 18.) are comprehended ; whereas the apostle speaks of none but those that died of the pestilence ; *Patrick's Commentary.*

commanded

commanded Moses † to erect a court of judicature consisting of the heads of all the families, and to try and hang all that had been guilty of this whoredom and idolatry, without respect to friendship or kindred; which was accordingly done, and about one thousand more were in this manner put to death.

By this time, the greatest part of the people being come a little to themselves, were bewailing their folly and wickedness at the door of the tabernacle; when they were surprised with * an instance of the most unparalleled boldness in one of the chiefs of the tribe of Simeon, named Zimri, who, in the sight of Moses, and the whole congregation, had brought a young Midianitish princess, whose

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

The impu-
dence and
punishment
of Zimri.

† According to our translation, the command which God gave Moses, runs thus:—*Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord, against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel*, Numb. xxv. 4. But unless we can suppose, that the heads of each tribe were guilty of this lewdness and idolatry, the sentence here denounced would have been highly unjust: And what others alledge, that they were guilty of a shameful neglect in not opposing the growing mischief, and punishing the offenders; this might be very probably out of their power, since even Moses himself, very frequently, found them too headstrong for him. It was somewhat strange therefore, that our translators should take the passage in this sense, when the Samaritan copy, the Jerusalem Targum, most of the ancient translations, and several later commentators of great note, have made the word *Otham*, i. e. *them*, not to refer to the heads of the people, but to such as had joined themselves to Baal-peor: And so the meaning of the command will be, that the heads of the people should divide themselves into several courts of judgment, and examine who had committed idolatry, and, after conviction, cause them to be hanged, i. e. hanged after they were stoned; for among the Hebrews none were hanged alive, but in the cases of idolatry or blasphemy, were first stoned, and then hanged up *against the sun*, i. e. publicly and openly, that all the people might see, and fear to sin; *Patrick's Commentary*.

* When the Israelites, at the instigation of the strange women they had received into the camp, were fallen from lust into idolatry, Moses (according to Josephus) perceiving that the infection began to spread, called the people together, and, in a general discourse, reminded them how unworthy a thing it was, and how great a scandal to the memory of their ancestors, for them to value the gratifying their lusts and appetites, above the reverence they owed to their God, and their religion; how incongruous a thing, for men that had been virtuous and

A. M.
2515, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1489, etc.
from Numb.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

whose name was Cozbi, into the camp, and was leading her into his tent. Their impudence however did not go unpunished; for Phineas, the son of Eleazar the high-priest, fired with a just indignation and holy zeal, followed them into the tent, with a javelin in his hand, where, in the very act of whoredom *, he thrust them both through the body, and by this action, not only obtained an high commendation from God, but an establish-
ment

modest in the desert, to lead such profligate lives in a good country, and squander away that in luxury which they had honestly acquired in the time of their distress; and thereupon he admonished them to repent in time, and to shew themselves brave men, not in the violation of the laws, but in the mastery of their unruly affections. This he spoke without naming any one: But Zimri, who took himself to be pointed at, rose up, and made the following speech. "You are at liberty, Moses, (says he) to use your own laws: They have been a long time in exercise, and custom is all that can be said for their strength or credit. Were it not for this, you would, to your cost, have found long since, that the Hebrews are not to be imposed upon; and I myself am one of the number, that never will truckle to your tyrannical oppression. For what's your business all this while, but under a bare pretext, and talk of laws and God, to bar us not only from the exercise, but the very desire of liberty? What are we the better for coming out of Egypt, if it be only in exchange for a more grievous bondage under Moses? You are to make here what laws you please, and we to abide the penalties of them, when at the same time, it is you only that deserve to be punished for abolishing such customs as are authorized by the common consent of nations, and setting up your own will and fancy against general practice and reason. For my own part, what I have done, I take to be well done, and shall make no difficulty to confess and justify it. I have, as you say, married a strange woman. I speak this with the liberty of an honest man; and I care not who knows it. I never meant to make a secret of it, and you need look no farther for an informer. I do acknowledge too, that I have changed my way of worship, and reckon it very reasonable for a man to examine all things, that would find out the truth, without being tied up (as if it were in a despotic government) to the opinion and humour of one single man;" *Jewish Antiq. lib. 4. c. 6.*

* Upon this fact the Jews found what they call *the judgment of zeal*, which authorized such as were full of this holy fervour, to punish any violent offenders, those, to wit, who blasphemed God, or prophaned the temple, *etc.* in the presence of

Chap. III. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 17

ment likewise of † the Aaronical priesthood in him, and his posterity, for ever after.

As soon as this disorder was quieted, and the offenders punished, Moses began to bethink himself of revenging the indignity which the Moabites and Midianites had put upon Israel; and to this purpose commanded a detachment

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, etc.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deuteronomy.

ten men of Israel, without any formal process. But this example of Phineas countenances no such practice; nor can this action, done upon an extraordinary occasion, by a person in a public authority, moved thereunto by a strong divine impulse, and (what is a circumstance that some people add) in a commonwealth not perfectly settled, be made a precedent for private men, under a different situation, to invade the office of the magistrate, and, with enthusiastic rage, to persecute even those that are most innocent; as we plainly find it happened among the Jews, when, in the latter times of their government, they put this precedent in execution; of which St. Steven, whom they inhumanly stoned, and St. Paul whom they vowed to assassinate, without any form of justice, are notorious instances; *Patrick's and Le Clerk's Commentaries.*

The total
defeat and
slaughter of
the Moabites
and
Midianites.

† This however is to be understood with a certain limitation; because it is manifest, that after some successions in the line of Phineas, the priesthood came, for a while, into the family of Eli, who was descended from Ithamor, the youngest son of Aaron. The reason of this interruption is not mentioned in Scripture; but some great sin, it is reasonable to suppose, provoked God to set aside the line of Eleazar for some years, till Eli's sons likewise became so wicked, that the priesthood was taken from them, and restored, in the days of Solomon, to the posterity of Phineas, with whom it continued, as long as the priesthood lasted. And this is enough to verify the promise of an everlasting priesthood, since the words *everlasting*, *perpetual*, and the like, in a general and indefinite sense, denote no more than a long duration. But there is another way of solving this difficulty; God had, before this time, limited the priesthood to Aaron and his descendents, and to them it was to be an *everlasting priesthood, throughout their generations*, Exod. xl. 15. upon this account it might properly enough be called, as limited to that family, *the everlasting priesthood*. So that God does not here promise Phineas, *and his seed after him, an everlasting grant* of the priesthood, as some commentators take it; nor a grant of *an everlasting priesthood*, as our English version renders it, but rather a grant of *the everlasting priesthood*, i. e. of the priesthood limited to Aaron and his descendents by that appellation; *Selden De success. Pontiff. lib. 1. c. 2* and *Shuckford's Connection, vol. 3. lib. 12.*

A. M. of twelve thousand choice men, *i. e.* * a thousand out of
 2515, &c. every tribe, to go against them; among whom was the
 Ant Christ. † gallant Phineas, who took with him the ark, and what
 1489, &c. was repositied therein, together with the sacred trumpets,
 from Num. to blow in the time of action, in order to animate the
 xviii. to the men. The Jewish army was but small in comparison of
 the end of Deu- the vast numbers they marched against; but God, who put
 teronomy. them upon the expedition, blessed them with such success,
 that they slew five kings, and, among them, the wicked
 prophet Balaam; put every one to the sword, except wo-
 men and children; and returned to Moses with a very
 considerable

* The Scripture gives us no account of the order of battle between these two armies; but, in all probability, they were disposed according to the method of ancient people of Asia; and therefore we may range the Israelites upon one line, formed of twelve corps, consisting of a thousand men each, at the head of which was the *ark of the covenant*, surrounded by the priests and Levites, whose business it was to sound the charge, as well as defend the ark. The Midianites, we may suppose, were, in like manner, ranged in a phalanx, upon one line, and as the Israelites were doubtless much inferior in number to their enemies, they made much larger intervals between the corps of a thousand men each, in order to penetrate the enemy's front in different places. This was the constant practice of the Jews, whenever they were inferior in number to their enemies; *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Midianites*.

† Whether this Phineas was sent to command the troops which were appointed by God to take vengeance on the Midianites, or whether he went along with the army, only to perform such sacred offices as should be required by the general, (who with more probability perhaps is thought to be Joshua), are questions arising from the silence of Scripture concerning the chief commander. Phineas indeed was a man of great courage, and had lately performed a singular piece of service, which had gained him great reputation, and from hence some have imagined, that he was the fitter person to be sent with an army *to avenge the Lord of Midian*; as it is certain, that in after-ages, the Maccabees (who were of the family of the priests) were appointed chief commanders. But then it must be considered, that these Maccabees were the supreme governours of the people, and as such, had a right to the military command; that in the war with the Amorites, Moses had sent the forces under Joshua's conduct; and that Phineas, in short, had another province appointed him, which was to take care of the holy instruments: But what these instruments were, is another question. Several interpreters are of opinion, that they were the Urim and Thummim which Phineas might take along with him,

Chap. III. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 19

considerable booty; one fiftieth part of which he ordered to be given to the priests, another fiftieth to the Levites, and the rest to be divided among the soldiery.

The remembrance, however, of what damage the Midianitish women had done, by alluring the Israelites to idolatry, made him think it unsafe to spare their lives; and therefore he ordered all those that had ever known man, as well as all the † male children, to be immediately dispatched,

him, in order to consult God, in case of any difficulty that might arise in the management of the war; and to countenance this, they suppose that Eleazar was superannuated, and his son substituted in his room. But it may be justly doubted, whether Phineas, being the only son of the high-priest, and not yet capable of that office, could be substituted to perform this great charge, which belonged to the high-priest alone; nor do we find any warrant for consulting the Lord by Urim and Thummim, but only before the tabernacle. It seems therefore much more likely, that by the holy instruments, Moses means the ark of the covenant, and what was included in it, which, in the following ages, was wont to be carried into the field, when the people went to fight against their enemies. Nay, Joshua himself, not long after this, ordered the ark to be carried, with priests blowing trumpets before it, when he surrounded Jericho, (Josh. vi. 4. &c.); and therefore since the holy instruments are here joined with the trumpets, it looks very probable, that they should signify the ark. Nor can we apprehend that Moses ran any risk in venturing the ark upon this occasion, because God had assured his people, that they should obtain a complete victory over the Midianites. It must be confessed, however, that the ark is never thus expressed in any other part of Scripture; and therefore perhaps they give as true a sense of the words as any, who make the holy instruments and trumpets to be one and the same thing, and the latter no more than an explication of the former; which trumpets the priests were commanded to take with them, that they might sound a charge when the engagement begun, according to their direction, Numb. x. 8, 9. and as the practice was in future ages; 2 Chron. xiii. 12.

† Moses ordered the male-children to be slain, that thereby he might extirpate the whole nation, as far as lay in his power, and prevent their avenging the death of their parents, in case they were suffered to live to man's estate. For it is no hard matter to conceive, how dangerous such a number of slaves, conscious that they were born free, and had lost their liberty with the massacre of their parents, might have proved to a commonwealth, every where surrounded with enemies. Why he was so severe against the women, we need not wonder, if we do but consider, that either by prostituting themselves, or their daughters, they had

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.
from Numb.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

A. M. 2515, etc. Ant. Christ. 1489, etc. from Numb. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy. patched, and none * but virgins to be saved alive ; and yet (what shews the greatness of the victory) the virgin-captives amounted to two and thirty thousand, and the plunder of cattle and flocks consisted of six hundred and seventy-five thousand sheep, seventy and two thousand oxen, and sixty, one thousand asses, besides a great quantity of rich goods and ornaments ; and (what makes the victory still more miraculous) not * one man on the Israelites side (as appears from the report of the officers made upon the muster) was lost in this engagement.

The officers of the army were very sensible, that in saving the captive-women alive, they had transgressed their

had been the chief instruments of drawing the Israelites into idolatry.

—Etsi nullum memorabile nomen

Feminea in pœna est, nec habet victoria laudem ;

Extinxisse nefas tamen, et fumpisse merentis

Laudabor pœnas. Virg. Æn. lib 2. ver. 583. &c.

Bibliotheca Bibl. and Le Clerc's Commentary on Numb. xxxi. 17.

* The Jews have a tradition, that, in order to find out who were real virgins, the young women were placed at a proper distance with other women, and all commanded to fix their eyes upon the high-priest's mitre ; whereupon those who had known man, turned instantly as pale as ashes, and those that had not, became as red as fire. But there seems to be no great occasion for this miracle, when either the appearance of an unqualified age, or the examination of some select matrons, might determine the matter as well ; *Bibliotheca Bibl. on Numb. xxxi. 18.*

* In the 5th chapter of the 1st book of Maccabees, we have an account of another victory, of the like nature, when Judas, after having several times defeated Timotheus, the Heathen general, assaulted the city of Ephron a whole day and a night, and all without the loss of a man. For they went up to mount Sion with joy and gladness, where they offered burnt-offerings, because not one of them was slain, until they had returned in peace. And (if other historians may be credited) the like has happened among other nations. After the famous and bloody battle of Leuctra, the Lacedemonians and Arcadians had a very sharp engagement, in which the latter lost many thousands of men, and the former not one : and in a sea-engagement, between the Portuguese and the Indians, Osorius Lusitanus tells us, that the Portuguese Admiral, Pacheco, succeeded so well, that he killed above fifteen hundred of the infidels, without the loss of one man ; *De Rebus Emman. lib. 3.* But whether this had any thing miraculous in it, or was only the effect of God's ordinary providence, we shall not pretend to determine ; *Bibliotheca Bibl. on Numb. xxxi. 49.*

commission ;

commission; and therefore * they presented a great quantity of jewels, and other rich spoils, both as an expiatory offering to atone for their offence, and for a gratulatory offering, in acknowledgment of God's goodness, in giving them so great and signal a victory.

The Israelites, by this time, had made themselves masters of the country that lay on the Midianitish side of Jordan; and the tribes of † Reuben and Gad, together with the half tribe of Manasseh, observing that the country was fertile, and stored with good pasturage, desired of Moses that they might be permitted to settle there, as a place very commodious for them, who had large stocks of cattle;

* The Jerusalem Targum supposes, that when these officers made their offerings, they addressed themselves to Moses in the following manner. "Forasmuch as the Lord has delivered the Midianites into our hands, and we have subdued the country, entered into their chambers, and seen their fair and charming daughters, took their crowns of gold from off their heads, their rings from their ears and fingers, their bracelets from their arms, and their jewels from their necks and bosoms; therefore far be it from us to have turned our eyes towards them. We had no manner of concern or conversation with them, lest we should thereby die the death of the wicked in Gihenna. And let this be had in remembrance on our behalf, in the day of the great judgment, to make a reconciliation for our souls before the Lord."

† In the division of the country, which the Israelites took from Sihon and Og, two vanquished kings that lived on the east side of Jordan, and whose dominions extended from the river Arnon even as far as mount Hermon, Deut. iii. 8. Moses gave to the tribe of Reuben the southern, or rather the south-west part of the country, so that they were bounded to the south with the river Arnon; to the west with Jordan; and to the north and east with the tribe of Gad. In this tribe stood Heshbon, the capital city of the kingdom of Sihon, situate on the hills over-against Jericho, about twenty miles distant from the river Jordan. The tribe of Gad was bounded with the river Jordan to the west; with the half tribe of Manasseh to the north with the Ammonites to the east; and with the tribe of Reuben to the south. In this tribe stood Astaroth, the capital city of the kingdom of Og, which very likely obtained its name from an idol, which was much worshipped in those times and parts. How the half tribe of Manasseh came to chuse to stay on the east side of Jordan, the sacred history makes no mention; but it is reasonable to suppose, that after they found that the tribes of Reuben and Gad had succeeded in their petition, they

A. M. 2515, &c.
Ant. Chris. 1489, &c.
from Num. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy.

Moses divides the country of Canaan among the tribes.

A. M. 2515, &c.
Ant. Christ. 1489, &c.
from Num. xviii, to the end of Deuteronomy.

the; which (upon condition that they should go over Jordan, and assist their brethren in the conquest of the land of Canaan) Moses consented to. And as they were now in the neighbourhood of Canaan, and just ready to enter upon the possession of it, he took this opportunity to appoint the limits of what they were to conquer, and the distribution of it by † way of Lot, which he committed to the management of Joshua and Eleazar, at the head of the chiefs of each tribe.

Makes Joshua his successor in the government.

Joshua was appointed by God to succeed Moses in his commission; and therefore, to prevent any contest after his death, he first laid his own hands upon him, and then presented him to Eleazar the high-priest, who, in a solemn form of admission, and in the presence of all the people, invested him with the office of being the leader and general of all Israel, after Moses had given him several directions relating to his offices, and one more especially, which concerned his consulting of God by way of Urim and Thummim upon every great emergency. In the divi-

they likewise might represent to Moses the great stock of cattle which they had; that the country would be equally commodious for them, and was over large for two tribes alone to occupy; nor is it to be doubted, but that Moses was inclinable to listen to their allegation, because the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had, by their valour, subdued a great part of the country, where they settled; which was bounded by the tribe of Gad to the south; with the sea of Cinnereth, (afterwards called *the lake of Gennesareth*, or *the sea of Galilee*) together with the course of the river Jordan, from its head to the said sea to the west; with mount Lebanon, or more peculiarly mount Hermon, to the north, and north-east; and with the mountains of Gilead to the east; *Wells's Geography of the Old Test.* vol. 2.

† Nothing could more prudently be contrived, than this partition of the country by lot, and making Joshua and the high-priest superintendents of it; since it was the only one that could effectually prevent all murmurings and quarrellings among such an obstinate people as the Jews were. However, as the lots were to bear a proportion to the bigness of each tribe and family, it is supposed from what followed, that every tribe first drew its lot for its own canton, and that then there were proper persons appointed to measure out a quantity of land for each family, according to their bigness. But whether this last was done by this or any other method; whether the subdivisions between the families were likewise carried on by lot, or otherwise, sure it is, that we read of no broils or jealousies that it ever occasioned among them; *Universal History*, lib. 1. c. 7.
sion

tion of the country, Moses assigned eight and forty cities, A. M. 2515, &c. Ant. Christ. 1489, &c. from Numb. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy. together with their suburbs, for the Levites to live in, and withal ordered, that six of these should be made cities of refuge, whether the † innocent manslayer, who had killed his neighbour by chance, might betake himself and live; tho', at the same time, he made all proper provision, that the wilful murderer should certainly be put to death: But in this and all other capital cases, he made it a law, that none should be convicted upon the evidence of one single person.

The nearer that Moses approached his death, the more he expressed his concern for the welfare of the people; and therefore, on the first day of the eleventh month, (which answers our January), and in the fortieth year from their departure out of Egypt, being then encamped on the plains of Moab by the banks of the river Jordan, he called them all together, and at different times made two very tender and pathetic speeches, wherein he briefly related to them all that had befallen their fathers, since the time they left Egypt; the gracious dealings of God with them; their continual murmurings and rebellions against him; and the many severe judgments that had followed thereupon, even to his own exclusion from the promised land. He gave them a summary of all the laws which the divine goodness had calculated for their happiness; and having repeated the decalogue almost word for word, he reminded them of the solemn and dreadful manner in which it was delivered from mount Sinai, and of the manifold obligations they lay under, to a strict observance of it. He encouraged them to be faithful to God, by assuring them, that if they kept his commandments, they should not fail of having innumerable blessings heaped upon them, and by threatening them with all manner of calamities, if so be they

† The person, who, without any premeditated malice, killed his neighbour accidentally, had the best provision imaginable made for his escape. For the ways that led to the cities of refuge, were to be made very plain and broad, and kept in good repair. Two students of the law were to accompany him, that, if the avenger of blood should overtake him before he got to the city, they might endeavour to pacify him by wise persuasions; and that he might not miss his way to the place, whither he intended to flee, there were posts erected, where two or three ways met, with the word *Miklal*, i. e. *the city of refuge*, inscribed on them, to direct him into the right road that led to it; *Patrick's Commentary on Numb. xxxv. 13.*

A. M. departed from them. He renewed the covenant which
 2515, etc. their fathers had made with God at Horeb; commanded
 Ant. Chrif. them to proclaim on † the mountains of Gerizim and He-
 1489, etc. bal beyond Jordan, blessings to thofe that obferved, and
 from Numb. bal beyond Jordan, blessings to thofe that obferved, and
 xviii. to the curfes to thofe that broke this covenant; and to erect an
 end of Deu- altar there, whereon they were to † write, in a legible cha-
 teronomy. racter, the terms and conditions of it.

Thefe, and feveral other directions relating to their fu-
 ture conduct in the land of Canaan, Mofes not only de-
 livered to the people by word of mouth but ordered to be
 written in a book, which he committed to the care and
 cuftody of the Levites, who, by God's appointment, laid it
 up on the fide of the ark, there to remain a witnefs a-
 gainft the children of Ifrael, in cafe they fhould rebel,
 'And that they might never want a proper fund of devo-
 tion, he compofed a fong, or poem, which he not only
 repeated

† Thefe two mountains are fituate in the tribe of Ephraim,
 near Shechem, in the province of Samaria, and are fo near to
 one another, that nothing but a valley of about two hundred
 paces wide parts them; fo that the priefts, ftanding and pro-
 nouncing the blessings and curfes, that were to attend the
 doers or violaters of the law, in a very loud and diftinct man-
 ner, might well enough be heard by the people that were feat-
 ed on the fides of the two hills, efpecially if the priefts were
 advanced upon pulpits, (as Ezra afterwards was, Neh. viii.
 4.), and had their pulpits placed at proper diftances; *Patrick's*,
 and *Calmet's Commentary*, in Deut. xxvii.

† In this twenty-feventh chapter of Deuteronomy, the Ifrael-
 ites were commanded to write upon certain ftones, all the words
 of the law very plainly, ver. 8. How many thefe ftones were,
 the Scripture makes no mention; but fome are of opinion, that
 they were twelve, according to the number of the pillars which
 Mofes employed (Exod. xxiv. 4.) when he made the covenant
 between God and his people. Knew we for certainty the num-
 ber of the ftones, we might better guefs what part of the law it
 was which Mofes ordered to be engraven upon them; fince, by
 reafon of this uncertainty, fome will have it to be the whole Pen-
 tateuch; others, no more than the decalogue; fome, that fum-
 mary of the laws which is contained in this book of Deuteronomy;
 and others, the curfes which follow from Deut. xxvii. 15. to the
 end of chap. xxviii. which feems to be more likely, becaufe they
 contain felect precepts, and the laft of them feems to comprife
 the whole law, ver. 26. and Jofh. viii. 34. But however we
 underftand this, it is certain, that before the ufe of paper was
 found out, the ancients, particularly the Phœnicians and Egyp-
 tians, were wont to write their minds upon ftones, as feveral
 authors

repeated to the people, but gave orders likewise that they should all learn it by heart : For therein he had expressed in a very elegant manner, the many benefits and favours of God to his people ; their ingratitude and forgetfulness of him ; the punishments wherewith he had afflicted them ; and the comminations of greater judgments, if they persisted to provoke him by the repetition of their follies.

Such was the care and concern of the Jewish law-giver for the welfare of the people after he was gone : And therefore, perceiving that the time of his dissolution was now at hand, he called them together ; and having taken a solemn farewell of them, in a prophetic blessing, which he pronounced upon each tribe, as Jacob had done just before his death, he went up * to the top of Pisgah, over-against Jericho, from whence he might take a full view of the country which God had promised to Abraham's posterity. For though he was an hundred and twenty years old, yet his natural strength and vigour was not impaired, nor had his eye-sight in the least failed him ; so that he was able to survey the beauteous prospect, which the delightful town and plains of Jericho, and the fair cliffs, and lofty cedars of Lebanon afforded him ; and having done this, he resigned his soul into the hands of seraphims, who were waiting to convey it into a happier Canaan than what he

A. M. 2515, &c. Ant. Chris. 1489, &c. from Num. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy.

Moses takes a farewell of the people, and goes up to Pisgah to take a view of the promised land, and there dies.

authors mentioned by Huetius (Demonstrat. Evang. propof. 4. chap. 2.) do abundantly testify. Nay, he observes, that this custom continued long after the invention of paper, especially if men desired that any thing should be publicly known, and transmitted down to posterity ; *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 3. l. 12. and *Patrick's Commentary*.

* The mountains of Abarim were a ridge of hills between the two rivers Arnon and Jordan. One part of these mountains was distinguished by the name of *Nebo*, as appears from Deut. xxxii. 49. ; and comparing this with Deut. xxxiv. 1. we shall find that *Nebo* and *Pisgah* were one and the same mountain, and that if there was any distinction between the names, it was probably this, that the top of the mountain was more peculiarly called *Pisgah*, because it comes from a root which signifies to *elevate*, or *raise up*, and so may very properly denote the top or *summit* of any mountain. Not far from *Nebo*, was *Bethpeor*, which very probably was so called from some deity of the same name, that was worshipped there. But of all these mountains it must be observed, that though they are said to be in the land of *Moab*, yet they really stood in the territories of *Sihon*, king of the *Amorites*, however they retained their old names, because once they belonged to the *Moabites* ; Numb. xxi. 26.

A. M. had been surveying; and to prevent the danger of the
 2515, etc. peoples idolizing him when he was gone *, God himself
 Ant. Christ. took care to bury his body in so secret a manner, in the
 1489, etc. land of Moab, over against Beth-peor, that the place of his
 from Numb. * sepulchre was never yet discovered.
 xviii. to the
 end of Deu
 teronomy.

Thus died * Moses the illustrious prophet and ser-

* This very reason we have in R. Levi Ben. Gershom. "Future generations," says he, "might perhaps have made a god of him, because of the fame of his miracles: for do we not see how some of the Israelites erred in the brazen serpent which Moses made? And what then would they not have done, had they but known where his remains were laid?" For this reason, very likely it was, that how much soever Moses was in love with Canaan, he did not desire to be carried thither to be buried with his ancestors, as Joseph did; because his interment in that country might have proved of dangerous consequence, if in their distress (especially in the captivity of the land) the children of Israel should have run to his sepulchre, and begged of him to pray for them, whose prayers and intercession, in their behalf, they had found in his lifetime so very prevalent; *Patrick's Commentary on Deut. xxiv. 6.*

* But notwithstanding all this precaution of God, the Christians boast, that they have discovered the sepulchre, which has been kept secret for so many ages. For, in the year 1655, some goats that were separated from the rest of the flock, went to feed in a certain place in the mountain Nebo, and returned from thence so odoriferous and perfumed, that the shepherds, astonished at so wonderful a prodigy, ran presently to consult with the patriarch of the Maronites, who sent thither two monks from mount Lebanon, and they discovered a monument, on which was this inscription, *Moses, the servant of the Lord.* But there is too much reason to think that this is all a fiction, on purpose to raise the reputation of the Maronites; as Bafnage in his history and religion of the Jews has sufficiently proved, *lib. 4. cap. 17.*

* Nothing can be plainer from the text, than that Moses did die, and was really buried; nay, Josephus tells us, that the Scripture affirms, that he died, lest people should think, because of the excellency of his person, that he was still alive, and with God. And yet notwithstanding this, some of the Jewish doctors do positively affirm, that he was translated into heaven, where he stands and ministers before God: and of those who admit of his death, and that his soul and body were really separated, the major part will not allow, that he died a common death; for their notion is, that *his soul departed with a kiss*, because he is said to die, *al pi, at the mouth*, (as it is literally in the Hebrew, i.e. according to the word) of God; but if there be any sense in the expression, it must be, that he parted with his soul with great cheerfulness and serenity of mind, *Witsius's Miscel. sacra.*

Ch. III. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 27

vant * of God; and when the people of Israel came to understand that he was dead, with great solemnity they lamented for him, for the space of thirty days.

A. M.
2515, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1489, etc.
from Numb.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

The OBJECTION.

“ **W**hoever wrote the character of Moses, at the conclusion of Deuteronomy, (for we can hardly presume that it was Moses himself), has not perhaps transcended the truth, in calling him a prophet superiour to any that had then arose in Israel, highly in favour of God, and admitted to a nearer communion with him; but certainly he means to put a banter on our faith, “ when

* The commendation which the author of Ecclesiasticus gives Moses, is conceived in these words: — “ Moses was beloved of God and men, and his memorial is blessed. The Lord made him like to the glorious saints, and magnified him so, that his enemies stood in fear of him, and by his word he caused the wonders to cease, and he made him glorious in the sight of kings, gave him ordinances for his people, and shewed him part of his glory. He sanctified him in his faithfulness and meekness, and chose him out of all men. He made him to hear his voice, and brought him into the dark cloud, and gave him commandments before his face, even the law of life and knowledge, that he might teach Jacob his covenant, and Israel his judgments,” chap. xlv. 1. &c. The character which Josephus gives him is to this effect: — “ He was a man of admirable wisdom, and one that made the best use of what he understood: An excellent speaker, and no man better skilled in moving the affections of the people than himself: And so great a master of his passions, that he lived as though he had none, or as if he only knew them by their names, or by observing them in others. Never was there a greater captain, nor a prophet equal to him; for all his words were oracles.” So true is the character which the sacred writer has given of him. *There arose not a prophet since in Israel, like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs, and the wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all the land, and in all that mighty hand, and in all that great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel, Deut. xxxiv. 10, etc.* “ Nor was he less famous to posterity for his writings, than he was to the age he lived in for his actions.” For besides the Pentateuch, (which is all of his own composition, except the conclusive chapter), the ancients generally thought, that he was the author of

A. M. 2515, &c. Ant. Chris. 1489, &c. from Numb. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy.

“ when he would persuade us that a person an hundred
 “ and twenty years old (as Moses was) could take a perfect
 “ view of the land of Canaan (*f*), which extends from E-
 “ gypt to Phœnicia, seventy leagues in length, and from
 “ the Mediteranean sea to the mountains of Libanus, at
 “ least thirty leagues in breadth : Nor can we see for what
 “ reason (if such pains were taken to shew him the pro-
 “ mised land) God should be so highly provoked against his
 “ favourite servant, as to seclude him, when just at the
 “ entrance of it, from taking possession of it.
 “ But he did not do so with Phineas, the priest whom
 “ he so highly extols, though his act was certainly more
 “ rash and unjustifiable, than any we find recorded of
 “ Moses. Zimri, we are told, was a *prince of a chief house*
 “ *among the Simeonites*, and consequently was not account-
 “ able to Phineas for his behaviour. His behaviour, it is
 “ owned, was vile and profligate enough ; but there then
 “ were proper courts of judicature, wherein to implead
 “ him, and to bring him to condign punishment. The
 “ Levites were remarkable for slaying some idolaters in
 “ another case, Exod. xxxii. 27. 28. but then they had a
 “ divine commission for what they did ; but for any hot-
 “ brained zealot, without any call from God, or order
 “ from his superiours, to take the sword, and to turn a-
 “ venger to execute his wrath upon another person, that
 “ he thinks does ill ; this is invading the magistrates office,
 “ with a witness, dissolving all civil order and govern-
 “ ment, encouraging murders and assassinations, and what
 “ has been a fatal precedent to incite and abet the most in-
 “ human actions.
 “ It cannot be denied, indeed, but that God was very
 “ kind to the Israelites, during their sojourning in a naked

of the book of Job, and of eleven Psalms, which begin at the
 90th, and end with the 100th, as there were once other books,
 such as his Lesser Genesis, the Revelation of Moses, the Ascen-
 sion of Moses, the Assumption of Moses, and the mysterious books
 of Moses, cited by some ancient writers, which were likewise a-
 scribed to him. And though they have long since lost their
 authority, and been exploded as spurious ; yet are they still an
 argument of the greatness of his name, when so many authors,
 to recommend their own performances, were so ambitious to
 assume it ; *Josephus's Antiq. lib. iv. c. 8.* ; and *Calmet's Dictionary*,
 under the word *Moses*.

(*f*) Lamy's Introduction, lib. i. c. 3.

“ and

Chap. III. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 29

“ and barren wilderness ; but Moses seems to carry the
 “ matter a little too far, when he tells them, (g) *that their*
 “ *raiment and shoes waxed not old upon them, neither did their*
 “ *feet swell for forty years* : Unless we can suppose, that
 “ God made their shoes of iron, and their coats of buff ;
 “ enlarged their cloaths in proportion as they grew big-
 “ ger, and wrought a perpetual miracle upon every gar-
 “ ment they wore, which is a little too much for our pre-
 “ sent digestion.

A. M.
 2515, &c.
 Ant. Christ.
 1489, &c.
 from Numb.
 xviii. to the
 end of Deu-
 teronomy.

“ When Balaam spoke in commendation of the Israel-
 “ ites he certainly spoke by a divine impulse ; for he him-
 “ self never wished them well ; and yet the compliment is
 “ not only extravagant, but quite abhorrent to truth, when
 “ he declares, (h) *God had not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nor*
 “ *seen perverseness in Israel*, though it is notorious that there
 “ was not a more perverse generation under the copes of
 “ heaven : a *stiff-necked people*, and *rebellious against the*
 “ *Lord*, as both the Lord and his servant Moses calls
 “ them.

“ Nor is the account which Balaam gives us of him-
 “ self less absurd and contradictory, than what he tells us
 “ of the Israelites : For when in that noted proem to his
 “ prophecy, he begins with (i) *Balaam, the son of Beor,*
 “ *bath said, who heard the words of God, and saw the vision of*
 “ *the Almighty* ; what can we imagine that he means by
 “ all this ? Can any one suppose, that God would ever
 “ communicate any revelation to such an impious wretch
 “ as he was known to be ? Or that the prince of Moab,
 “ and all his council should be so far infatuated, as to
 “ think that it lay in the power of any man (much less of
 “ such a profligate) to do either good or evil to their e-
 “ nemies, and by the breath of his mouth, to alter the fate
 “ of war ?

“ Moses indeed may be supposed to have had some
 “ portion of a divine spirit residing in him, and might
 “ therefore foretel the (k) *coming of a prophet, raised up*
 “ *among his brethren*, or descended from a *Jewish race,*
 “ *like unto himself*, which nevertheless might relate to Jo-
 “ shua, or any other prophet, as well as the Messiah.
 “ But that so wicked a miscreant as Balaam, should pro-
 “ phesy of our Saviour's advent, (l) under the image of a

(g) Deut. viii. 4. ; and xxix. 5. (h) Numb. xxiii. 22.
 (i) Numb. xxiv. 3, 4. (k) Deut. xviii. 15. (l) Numb. xxiv.
 17.

A. M. 2515, &c. Ant. Christ. 1489, &c. from Numb. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy.

“ *star coming out of Jacob, and a sceptre rising out of Israel*, is the most incongruous thing in nature ; and therefore, if there be a designation of any person in the words, it must necessarily refer us to some such king as David, who, in a literal sense, *smote the corners of Moab, and destroyed the children of Seth*.

“ The truth is, the whole adventure of Balaam and his ass is so very romantic, that we do not well know what to make of it. For, in the first place, if God was averse to his going with the princes of Moab, why did he permit him to go ? After such permission, why was *his anger kindled against him* for going ? If he had been minded to obstruct his journey, this certainly might have been done in a much more easy and compendious way, that by giving himself the trouble to send an angel express, and (*m*) *to open the mouth of the dumb ass, to forbid the madness of the prophet*.

“ In poets, and other visionary writers, we sometimes read of dumb creatures speaking. The ram of Phrixus, the horse of Achilles, the bull of Europa, &c. are instances of this kind : But in so grave and inspired an author as Moses is reputed to be, and on so trivial an occasion as this, it is the height of absurdity to meet with a loquacious ass ; and (what is the wonder of all) to find Balaam not at all startled to hear her speak, but immediately entering into discourse with her, as if they had been old companions, and had held many a dialogue together before.

“ Balaam, in short, was an odd mixture of a man. Here we find him endeavouring what he could to curse the people of God, and immediately professing that he *would* (*n*) *take heed to speak nothing, but what the Lord should put into his mouth* ; for the *wages of unrighteousness*, now betaking himself to diabolical enchantments, and anon, in a devotional fit, sending up his prayer to God, (*o*) *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his*. However, he was far from obtaining his request ; for though one part of the history says, that (*p*) *he went and returned to his place*, i. e. his own house in Mesopotamia, upon the banks of Euphrates ; yet we find in another, that, together with five

(*m*) Numb. xxii. 28. ; and 2 Pet. ii. 16. (*n*) Numb. xxiii. 12. (*o*) Ver. 10. (*p*) Numb. xxiv. 25.

“ of the Midianitish kings, (q) *Balaam the son of Beor was slain by the sword*: So very inconsistent is the account which Moses has given us of this wild inchanter.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Chris.
1489, &c.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

“ In recounting the manifold mercies of God, Moses reminds the people, that (r) *in the great and terrible wilderness*, where they sojourned so long, *there were serpents and scorpions* in abundance, so that it is no wonder at all that they were stung with them; the wonder is, how they came to escape so long, and how the image of a serpent, which had done them so much harm, should cure them by intuition. Men generally abhor the sight even of the figure of any thing that they have suffered much by; and therefore we cannot but conceive, that this brazen serpent fixed upon a pole, must have been a means to inflame, rather than allay the poison, which the living ones had infused, in all persons directed to look up to it.

“ But the mistake of proper means is not the worst imputation that this part of the Mosaic history throws upon God. (s) *God is merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in mercy and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin*; and yet herein is he represented, not only as raving, and (t) *swearing in his wrath*, but commanding the Israelites likewise to extirpate whole nations, who had never done them any injury; and in doing of this, to proceed with the utmost barbarity, to slay men, women, and children, whereof the last, at least, (in hopes of their conversion), might more properly have been saved alive.

“ Again, God is the general father, and universal lover of mankind; for (u) *he is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him*; and yet, as if the rest of mankind were mere reprobates, we find him enjoining the Israelites to live a secluse, unsociable life, to have no intercourse with other nations; but to look upon them with an evil eye, and as if they were their enemies. Once more, God is a generous benefactor: What he does, he does freely, and without any by-ends; what he gives, he gives cheerfully, and upbraids not: and therefore we cannot reconcile it to these properties of his, that he should be so frequently casting

(q) Numb. xxi. 8. (r) Deut. viii. 15. (s) Exod xxxiv. 6, 7. (t) Deut. i. 34. (u) Acts x. 34, 35.

A. M. 2515, etc. Ant. Chrif. 1489, etc. from Num. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy.

“ his people in the teeth with their former wretched condition, fo incessantly reminding them, (x) that *they were bondmen in Egypt*, and that it was his hand, and stretched-out arm, that delivered them. In a word, whatever argues vanity or insult, narrowness of mind, or cruelty of temper, can never belong to God; and therefore whatever politic reasons the Israelites might have for depopulating whole nations, and making the land of Canaan their own, they could never receive this injunction from the Fountain of all goodness: (y) *Thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them, and make no covenant with them, nor have compassion on them*; (z) a command not only abhorrent to the nature of God, but inconsistent likewise with all those duties that men, as men, owe to one another.”

Answered, by shewing who the author of the last chapter of Deuteronomy was.

But Philo and Josephus are of opinion, that the account of Moses's death and burial, of the mourning which the Israelites made for him, and of the character which, in the conclusion of Deuteronomy, we find recorded of him, was penned by Moses himself, in consequence of the prescience which God was pleased to communicate to him: And the reason (a) which Josephus gives for his thus relating the circumstances of his death beforehand, is, that the people, out of the great veneration they had for his person, might not imagine that he was translated.

But suppose this account to have been written after the death of Moses, by Joshua, Eleazar, or the seventy elders, or, (as some imagine) much later, by Samuel, or even by Ezra himself, who, after the Babylonish captivity, made a revival of the sacred books; suppose it, I say, to have been written by any other hand whatever, yet this can no ways affect the authority of the rest of the Pentateuch, or imply that Moses was not the writer of it, unless we will be so perverse as to say, that the addition of some few lines, or or even of a whole page, as an appendix to another man's book, makes the book no longer his.

There is another opinion, which seems very consonant both to reason, and matter of fact, and that is, that the last of the books of Moses, viz. the book of Deu-

(x) Deut. xvi. 12. (y) Deut. vii. 2. (z) Christianity as old as the Creation, p. 273. (a) Jewish History, lib. 4. c. 7.

Chap. III. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 33

teronomy, ended with this prophetic blessing † upon the twelve tribes. (b) *Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord?* And that which makes now the last chapter of Deuteronomy, was formerly the first of Joshua, but thence removed and adjoined to the other by way of supplement.

A. M. 2515, etc.
Ant. Chris. 1489, etc.
from Num. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy.

Before the invention of sections, and other divisions, or so much as of pauses, and points of distinction; and when sometimes several books were connected together, and followed each other upon the same roll, (as the ancient method of writing was), it is no hard matter to conceive, how easily the beginning of one book might be transferred to the end of another, and, in process of time, make that be reputed the conclusion of Deuteronomy, which was originally intended for the introduction to the book of Joshua. And if this be the case, it is no wonder, that we meet with several passages in this introduction, which were in reality wrote by a later hand than Moses. But then, by whomsoever, or at what time soever, these passages were wrote, whether before or after the destruction of the first temple, they can no ways invalidate the authority of the other parts of the book of Deuteronomy, to which imprudently, and by way of mistake perhaps, they came to be annexed: Nor can the canonicalness of these very passages be called in question; since it is agreed on all hands, that they were written by a person of a prophetic spirit, and had in all ages the sanction of the great synagogue.

But whoever was the author of this additional chapter in Deuteronomy, it cannot well be accounted an impossible thing for God to shew Moses the compass of the land of Canaan, from the top of Mount Nebo. The Jews indeed have a notion, that God laid before him a map of the whole country, and shewed him therein how every part of it was situate; where each valley lay, each mountain stood, each river ran, and for what remarkable product each place was renowned: But if this had been all, we cannot see for what reason Moses was ordered to go upon the highest part of the mount, since in the lowest

No impossibility in Moses's taking a view of the land of Canaan.

† All the tribes are blessed, except the tribe of Simeon, and his is included in what is said concerning Judah.

(b) Deut. xxxiii. 29.

A. M. 2515, *&c.* Ant. Christ. 1489, *&c.* plains of Moab, he might have given him a demonstration of this kind every whit as well.

It was for some purpose therefore, that the sacred historian has informed us, that though Moses was an hundred and twenty years old, *yet his eyes were not dim*: And if we suppose, that, upon this occasion, God strengthened them with a greater vigour than ordinary, to enable him to take a larger prospect of the country, so that from this eminence, he might see Dan and mount Lebanon, to the north; the lake of Sodom and the city Zoar, to the south; the Mediterranean-sea to the west; and (as the town and country of Jericho was just at hand) he might easily discern the land of Gilead to the north-east. This indeed may be a compass above the stretch of human sight; but if God was pleased to assist his visive faculties a little, the matter might easily have been done: And accordingly (c) some of the Jewish doctors have been wise enough in putting together both the natural clearness of Moses's eyes, and the additional strength which God, at this time, vouchsafed to give them: "For God shewed him, (say they), the whole land, as in a garden-plot; and gave his eyes such power of contemplating it, from the beginning to the end, that he saw hills and dales, what was open, and what was inclosed, remote or nigh, at one single view or intuition."

His offence, and why thought so criminal, as to exclude him from Canaan. The Talmudists have a very odd conceit, that the great sin for which Moses was hindered from going into the land of Canaan, was, because he called the people of God (d) Rebels; and from thence they have formed a maxim, that "he who treats the church, which ought to be honoured, with contempt, is, as if he blasphemed the name of God." But, in opposition to this, it should be considered, that Moses, on this occasion, uses the very same language that God himself does, when he bids him (e) *lay up the rod of Aaron, as a token against the rebels*; and that if this was the thing wherein he offended God, he not long after committed the same thing, (which he would hardly have done, considering already that it had cost him so dear), when he told the people plainly, (f) *ye have been rebellious against the Lord, ever since I knew you*.

Several Christian, as well as Jewish expositors, think, that the transgression of Moses lay in smiting the rock,

(c) Patrick's Commentary, on Deut. xxxiv. (d) Numb. xx. 10. (e) Ibid. chap. xvii. 10. (f) Deut. ix. 24.

when

when his instructions only were to speak to it; and for the support of this, they allege, that God is an absolute sovereign, expecting an absolute obedience, and exacting punishment even of his greatest favourites, when they pretend to vary from his commands, or to mix their own conceptions with his directions: And that there was some such prevarication in the conduct of Moses and Aaron, seems to be implied in God's remonstrance, which immediately follows; (g) *because ye believed me not* or (as it should be translated) *because ye were not faithful to me, to (sanctify and) glorify me in the eyes of the children of Israel; therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.*

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

It is granted indeed, that God ordered Moses to take his rod with him; and why should he take it, unless it were to strike the rock, as he had done before? But the Israelites perhaps began now to entertain a superstitious fancy of the virtue of this rod, which had been the instrument of so many miracles wrought before them; and therefore God was minded to give Moses an opportunity of convincing them of their folly, by making it appear, that neither himself, nor Aaron, nor the rod, was of any importance; that he alone was the worker of miracles, which he was able at any time to do, by a word's speaking. This had been doing justice to the honour of God, but instead of this Moses spake and acted (h) unadvisedly, *i. e.* he spake and acted of himself, and what he had no commission to do, and thereby gave the Israelites an opportunity to imagine, that the supply of water might come from him, from his power and ability to procure it. The truth is, the divine writers, who have touched upon this history, have made mention of two defaults in Moses, *viz.* his impatience and his infidelity; and therefore we may suppose, that (the water now ceasing at the time, (i) when his sister Miriam died) he was exceedingly troubled on both these accounts: that unexpectedly assaulted by the people, who ought to have paid him more reverence, especially in a time of mourning, he fell into a greater commotion of anger and indignation, than was usual in him; and that this anger gave such a disturbance to his mind, and so disordered his thoughts, that when God bad him *take his rod, and go, and speak to the rock*, he fell into some doubt, whether the divine goodness would grant the people the same

(g) Numb. xx. 12. (h) Psal. cvi. 33. (i) Numb. xx. 1.

A. M. 2515, &c.
Ant. Christ. 1489, &c.
from Num. xviii. to the
end of Dou-
teronomy.

favour he had done before ; that therefore he struck the rock with diffidence, believing it improbable, that such worthless and rebellious wretches should deserve a miracle, and that the water not issuing out at the first stroke, his diffidence increased into unbelief, and a settled persuasion that they should have none at all.

There is one conjecture more of a very learned (*k*) man, which I shall but just mention, *viz.* that Moses began to distrust God's providence of entering into the land of Canaan at the end of forty years, and to imagine, that if he brought water again out of the rock, it must follow them as long as the other had done, and engage them again in the like wanderings; and therefore the comment which he makes upon Moses's words is this:—"What, ye rebels, must we bring water out of the rock, as we did at Horeb? Are all our hopes and expectations of getting out of the wilderness come to this? We never fetched water out of the rock but once, and that was, because we were to stay a long time in the wilderness; and must we begin our abode here again, when we thought we had attained to the end of our travels?" And with that he smote the rock in a passion twice; whereas God had commanded him only to speak to it. But whichsoever of these conjectures we are inclined to think most plausible, there are few writers who are not disposed to extenuate the fault of Moses, as not deserving so severe a punishment, had not God, in passing the sentence of exclusion upon him, considered the eminence and dignity of a person in his station, in whom a transgression of any kind could not but be far more grievous and inexcusable, than in an ordinary man.

For this reason we may observe, that when Moses has related the wickedness and punishment of Zimri, he takes care to inform us (*l*) of his family, his titles, and his high station in life. He was the prince of a tribe, the head of thousands in Israel, and one of the renowned men of the congregation. In this capacity he had a right to be an assessor with Moses and Aaron, and the other rulers in the government of the people; and consequently could not regularly be brought under the sentence of those judges who were inferior to him. This he knew full well; and therefore, in defiance of the laws, and in contempt of all autho-

(*k*) *Lightfoot's* Chronica. temp.

(*l*) Numb. xxv. 14.

rity, (m) while the children of Israel were weeping before the door of the congregation in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the people, he brought a Midianitish woman into his tent. A. M. 2515, &c. Ant. Christ. 1489, &c. Moses had ordered the (n) judges to slay every one his men that were joined to Baal-peor; but we hear of none that were punished for this wickedness, except this Zimri, and those that afterwards died in the plague: The transgression was become too universal to be corrected by a judiciary proceeding, and the example of so leading a man was enough to bear all down before it, and make the infection spread. God had already ordered, that the persons who committed this great offence should (o) be punished in a very exemplary manner: In regard to God therefore, Zimri was under sentence of condemnation, and as his guilt was too glaring and notorious to need conviction, and the judges were found timorous and remiss in the execution of their office, there was certainly wanting, on this important occasion, a proper person to supply their place. from Num. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy.

Now, that the act of Phineas in slaying Zimri was not the effect of zeal, and warm resentment only, but of a divine impulse and instigation so to do, I think is evident from the testimony of God himself, when he declares to Moses, that Phineas, by the death of Zimri, (p) had made an atonement for the children of Israel. For what atonement could he pretend to make, unless God had appointed him? (q) no man taketh this honour upon himself, neither can any one perform this office to good purpose, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron. And therefore there is no propriety in the words, unless we suppose, that God ordered Phineas to make a propitiatory sacrifice of the blood of the offenders; and for the confirmation of this, we find God requiring of Moses to say to the people, (r) Behold I give unto him my covenant of peace; or (as it should more truly be rendered) behold it was I who gave unto him my covenant of peace: The intent of which declaration is to inform the congregation, that Phineas had not done a rash action out of his own mere motion and warmth of heart, but that he had the immediate direction and appointment of God for what he did; that God had made a previous covenant with him to that purpose; and given him positive assurance, that upon the death of Zimri and Cosbi,

(m) Ver. 6. (n) Ver. 5. (o) Ver. 4. (p) Ver. 13.
(q) Heb. v. 4. (r) Numb. xxv. 12.

A. M. 2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

slain by his hands, the wickedness that had been committed in the camp should be forgiven. And therefore we find God espousing the deed, and in a kind of exultation, declaring (s) *Phineas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, in being thus zealous for my sake, hath turned away my wrath from the children of Israel.* In this view of the fact all is clear; nor can this example lay any foundation for a dangerous imitation, because it will in no wise prove, that an illegal action, though proceeding from a most upright heart, zealously affected in a good thing, is ever to be justified, unless God, by an express and well-attested revelation from heaven, declares his patronage and acceptance of it.

In what
sense the Is-
raelites rai-
ments wax-
ed not old.

The Jews, who love to magnify miracles, sometimes beyond their proper bounds, have a current tradition, that the cloaths grew bigger according as the children themselves increased in bulk and stature: But there is no occasion for any such supposition as this; since the younger, in their proper degrees, might succeed to the vestments of the elder, and the miracle still remain wonderful enough, that God should preserve these vestments from decaying, or their feet, by so long travelling in hot and stony places, from swelling, or being callous (as some translate it) for the space of forty years. Some indeed will have the phrase to denote, that their feet were not sensible of any uneasiness or fatigue, through the whole vast length of their journey; but this construction is plainly repugnant (t) to the Scripture-account we have of their travels; and therefore the easier interpretation will be, if by way of metonymy, we take the shoe for the foot, and so make the latter agree with the former part of the verse, and bring the whole to this meaning, viz. “that as their cloaths, which
“ covered the whole body, did not become useless through
“ age; so neither did their shoes decay, or burst, or grow
“ out of shape, (for in all these senses may the original
“ word be taken), though they were engaged in so tedious
“ a march.”

It is to be observed however, that the Hebrews wanted neither flocks nor herds in the wilderness; and the hangings, and other works belonging to the tabernacle sufficiently show, that they were no strangers to the art of weaving. But supposing they did not manufacture their own cloaths, they might however purchase them from the

(s) Ver. 11.

(t) Vid. Deut. viii. 5.; and xxix. 5.

Arabian,

Arabians, and other neighbouring nations, and could therefore be under no want of a sufficient supply of this kind of necessaries. And from these considerations (u) a learned commentator concludes, that the sense of the words, *thy raiment waxed not old upon thee*, must be— That in the deserts of Arabia, the Israelites had so great a plenty of cloaths, and so many changes of raiment, that they were under no more necessity to wear them tattered, or thread-bare, than if they had lived in one of the most plentiful, rich, and cloth-working countries. And thy feet did not swell, or grow callous, as poor people's feet are wont to do, when the soles of their shoes are worn out, and they forced to tread upon the hard ground; for so it is explained in another place, (x) *thy shoe did not wax old upon thy foot*, i. e. thy poverty did not oblige thee to wear thy shoes (as poor people do) till they were old, and grown so very thin, that in hard and stony ways they hurt thy feet, and made them swell. Poverty, we know, necessarily occasions a meanness of apparel; but men of large fortunes have a variety of suits, and commonly cast their cloaths off before they are too far worn: and in like manner the historian's design is (in this instance of raiment) to signify to us, that the Israelites, while they abode in a barren wilderness, lived like men of affluence; (y) *for the Lord their God was with them*, (as he tells us elsewhere), *and they lacked nothing*.

But how well soever God might provide for the Israelites in this, and all other instances of his paternal care, yet we cannot think, with some predestinarians, that like an over-fond parent, he was blind to their faults. The word *Aven*, which we translate *iniquity*, and the word *Amal*, which we render *perverse*, do both very frequently signify in Scripture the highest kind of wickedness, i. e. *idolatry*; and so the reason which Balaam assigns, why God had blessed the Israelites, and would not curse them, is, that they had not as yet incurred the sin of idolatry. Some private men might perhaps be guilty of it, but it was not yet become national and epidemical; nor were there any hopes that God would ever deliver them into the power of their enemies, unless, some way or other, they should be seduced into that sin; and therefore Balaam advised the

A. M.
2513, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

(u) Le Clerc's Comment. in Deut. viii. 4. (x) Deut. xxix. 5.
(y) Deut. ii. 7.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1483, &c.
from Numb.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

prince of Moab, by the allurements of some beautiful women, to entice them into it, as the likeliest way to deprive them of the divine protection.

Others take the words in a common sense, to denote *sin*, or *wickedness* in general; but then, by the word *see*, or *behold*, they understand such an observation of this wickedness, as marks it out for punishment. According to this observation, they make the meaning of the phrase to be, that “ though the Israelites were confessedly guilty of many great crimes, yet since they were not universally so, God would have more regard to his own promises, than to the sins of some particulars; because he is a God of perfect veracity, and the unbelief and impiety of ill men shall not have force enough with him to recal and annul his promises to the good.”

There is another signification of the word, which we render *behold*, and that is, to *look upon with pleasure and approbation*: and (z) therefore, as the particle *Beth* does frequently signify *against*, as well as *in*, (and (a) so occurs in several parts of Scripture), the sense of the words will naturally run thus, *God does not approve of any wicked designs or practices against Jacob*; for the words which we render *iniquity* and *perverseness*, do equally signify *outrage* or *oppression*, *deceit*, or machinations of any kind, which God declares he would not suffer to be attempted against his people. And therefore Balaam, upon a review of the many blessings and deliverances which God had vouchsafed them, breaks out into this reflection, and therewith concludes his prophetic speech: (b) *Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion; he shall not lie down, until he eat of the prey, and drink of the blood.*

Thus, in what sense soever we take the words, whether as relating to idolatry, of which the Israelites, in the main, were not at that time guilty; or to wickedness in general, which God's promises to the forefathers restrained him from punishing, though they might be guilty; or to the evil designs and practices against his people, which his justice and goodness both obliged him to disapprove; we shall have no reason to accuse him of a blind partiality to-

(z) An Essay towards a new version of the Scripture. (a) *Ibid.* Exod. xiv. 25—xx. 16.; Numb. xii. 1.—xxiii. 23. *et alibi.* (b) Numb. xxiii. 24.

Chap. III. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 41

wards them, but much, very much, to cry out with the inspired writers, (c) *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and true is thy judgment*; (d) *with the holy, thou shalt be holy*; and with the upright man thou shalt be perfect; for the Lord knoweth who are his, and can rightly distinguish between those that serve him, and those that serve him not.

Of the number of those who served not God, Balaam was certainly one; and yet we have reason to presume, that he nevertheless was a real prophet. The Jews indeed are generally of opinion, that he was a busy and pretending astrologer, who, observing when men were under a bad aspect of the stars, pronounced a curse upon them; which sometimes coming to pass, gained him, in some neighbouring nations, a reputation in his way. Several of the ancient fathers suppose him to be no more than a common soothsayer, (for so he (e) is called), who undertook to foretell future events, and discover secrets, &c. but by no good and justifiable arts. Origen will needs have it, that he was no prophet, but only one of the devil's forcerers; and that of him he went to inquire; but God was pleased to prevent him, and * to put what answers he pleased into his mouth. It cannot be denied, however, but that (f) the Scripture expressly calls him a prophet; and therefore some later writers have imagined, that he had been once a good man, and a true prophet, till loving the wages of iniquity, and prostituting the honour of his office to covetousness, he apostatized from God, and betaking himself to idolatrous practices, fell under the delusion of the devil, of whom he learnt all his magical enchantments; though at this juncture, when the preservation of his people was concerned, it might consist with God's wisdom to appear to him, and vouchsafe his revelations.

(c) Psal. cxix. 137. (d) Psal. xviii. 25. (e) Numb. xxii. 5. and Josh. xiii. 22.

* To this purpose Philo, in his life of Moses, brings in an angel discoursing with Balaam to this effect. "It will be in vain for you to contend, for I, without your privity or knowledge, will guide the organs of your mouth, and make you speak what upon this occasion is fit and proper. I will direct your speech, and cause you to utter prophecies, tho' you know nothing of the matter." Several passages to the same purpose are likewise to be found in Josephus, (Antiq. lib. iv. c. 7), tho' there is no foundation for them in what Moses tells us concerning these adventures of Balaam.

(f) 2 Pet. ii. 16.

A. M. 2515, &c.
 Ant. Christ. 1489, &c.
 from Numb. xviii, to the end of Deuteronomy.

Balaam indeed was a man of no great probity, and might by profession be a diviner ; but, by the free access he had to God, it seems to be apparent, that he was no common forcerer, or prophet of the devil : for did ever any forcerer address his prayers to the supreme God, and receive answers and instructions from him ? Did ever any forcerer prescribe a law to himself, to say nothing less or more than what the Spirit of God should dictate ? The spirit of God, when did it ever come upon an enchanter ? Or was it ever known, than an oracle, upon a remote event, and what God alone was capable of revealing, should be declared by a mere magician ?

When God was pleased to give answers to his inquiries, to make his angel appear to him, and to put the word of prophecy in his mouth, on all these occasions, we find him expressing no surprise at all, as if he had been perfectly well acquainted with these several ways of divine communication ; and therefore, bad as he was, and a slave to his passions, he must nevertheless be deemed a true prophet of God. The only suspicious passage in his conduct, is his having recourse to enchantments ; for (g) *what concord hath God with Belial ?* Or what service could he possibly promise himself by making use of these ? But to this it may be replied, that (h) the arts of magicians, and their incantations to procure oracles and prodigies, were, by the greatest philosophers of these times, held in great veneration, and by them reputed to be true. Though therefore this Balaam was really a prophet, yet as a man of learning, he might not be a stranger to the theory of what human science, and the then reputed natural knowledge had advanced upon these subjects : And as Saul, though he had before, (i) *put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land* ; was yet induced, when the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets, to go to a woman that had a familiar spirit, and inquire of her ; so Balaam, finding nothing but a full disappointment in all his views, in the several revelations which God was pleased to make to him, and being warmly inclined to purchase (if he might with any colour be able to do it) the advancement which Balak had offered him, was tempted to try what might be the event, if he used some of the arts which most learned

(g) 2 Cor. vi. 15. (h) Shuckford's Connection, vol. 3. lib. 12. (i) Sam. xxviii. 3. &c.

nations held in the highest repute, and esteemed to be of the greatest efficacy: He tried, but *found (k) no enchantment against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel.*

To enter therefore into the character of this true prophet and inchanter both, we must observe, 1st, That before the giving of the law, and the conquest of the promised land, there were other true † worshipers of God, besides the descendents of Abraham, dispersed over the face of the earth. 2dly, That this worship of God † was frequently mixed with superstition and idolatry, even among them who professed to adore that one God of heaven and earth. 3dly, That this odious mixture did not hinder God † from revealing himself to those who practised such a monstrous and motley religion. 4thly, That supernatural gifts in general, and those of prophecy in particular, though they enlightened the minds of the prophets, yet, * many times did not sanctify their hearts and affections. And, 5thly, That the greatest weakness or wickedness of prophets, never went so far, as to make them pronounce oracles contrary to what was dictated to them by the Spirit of God: (l) *If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, to do either good or bad of my own mind, but what the Lord saith, that must I speak.*

It is not to be questioned therefore, but that Balaam was conscious of his own inspiration, and did knowingly obey the divine will; but still he could have wished, for Balak's sake, as well as his own, that he might have been permitted to pronounce different things, to what he did; even as the prophets of Israel, in future ages, when ordered to denounce judgments against the people, would have desired liberty, no doubt, to prophecy things of a more grateful relish; but as they could not have that per-

(k) Numb. xxiii. 23.

† Thus Job and his friends dwelt in Arabia; Jethro and his posterity in the country of Midian; and Abraham's abode in Mesopotamia (where Balaam lived) might leave behind him some profelytes to the true religion.

† The Teraphim of Laban proves this.

† Abimelech and Nebuchadnezzar are instances of this, Gen. xxvi. ; and Dan. ii. 1.

* For so we read, *the heads of God's people judge for reward, and the priests thereof judge for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money,* Micah iii. 11.

(l) Numb. xxii. 38.

mission,

A. M.
2515, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1489, etc.
from Numb.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.
The odd-
ness of his
character
and behavi-
our account-
ed for.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.
from Numb.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

mission, they obeyed, (though with some reluctance), and when they came to the point, did nevertheless pronounce boldly what they were ordered to promulge.

And this, by the way, will, in some measure, account for the mixture in Balaam's behaviour, *viz.* his seeking for enchantments in one minute, and falling into a fit of devotion in the next. For, besides that the words which he utters upon this occasion, are not properly his own, but infused into him by the Spirit of God, and for which, consequently, he is not responsible, to hear a wicked man sometimes come out with a pious wish, or holy ejaculation, can be no incongruous thing at all. (m) The character of virtue is so very beautiful, its end is so comfortable, and the odour of its memory so sweet, that even wicked men cannot see and hear it, without secretly preferring it, and inwardly sighing for it, and wishing at least that it were their own: And therefore it is no wonder, that even Balaam, under some sudden compunction of mind, or conviction of the amiableness and happy estate of virtue, both here and hereafter, should desire to die the righteous man's death. But there is something more to be said for Balaam in this respect, than for other wicked men; and that is, the business he was now about. The whole series of his behaviour indeed shews him to be a vain, ostentatious man. By the preamble to his prophecies, (n) *Balaam, the son of Beor, hath said, and the man whose eyes are open, who knew the knowledge of the Most High, and saw the vision of the Almighty, hath said, &c.* He would make us believe, that he was a man of no small consideration, vastly familiar with God, and * quite superiour to the little pretenders of his age; and as we may farther observe, that in all his intercourse with Balak, he never pretended to consult any but God, we cannot but think, that to seem to be in earnest about the matter, and now and then drop a religious sentence, was no more than what became the business he was upon, and the character he thought proper to assume, even supposing the

(m) Young's sermons, vol. ii. (n) Numb. xxiv. 15, 16.

* The Jerusalem Targum paraphrases Balaam's words in a manner that shews his ostentatiousness: *The man said, who was honoured above his brethren, to whom that was revealed, which was hidden from all the prophets*; Patrick's Commentary, on Numb. xxiv. 3.

words to have been of his own invention, which (as we said before) were of divine inspiration.

Of all the prophecies which God at this time delivered from the mouth of Balaam, there is one of a more eminent and peculiar nature : (o) *I shall see him, but not now ; I shall behold him but not nigh : There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Seth.* All opinions agree in this, that Balaam here speaks of a king and conqueror ; and perhaps in calling him a star, he accommodates himself to the long-established notion, * that the appearance of comets denoted either the exaltation or destruction of kingdoms : But the great question is, of what king or conqueror is it that he speaks ?

(p) Some have applied the prophecy entirely to David, the most illustrious of the Jewish monarchs, who extended his conquests far and wide. (q) Others have applied it as entirely to the Messiah, supposing that the metaphor of a star comports better with him, and his celestial origin, than with David ; and that the main strokes of the prophecy resemble an heavenly, more than an earthly conqueror. The matter however may be comprised, if we will but allow (r) of a learned man's observation, viz. that the most remarkable prophecies in the Old Testament bear usually a two-fold sense ; one relating to the times before the Messiah, and the other, either fulfilled in the person of the Messiah, or in the members of his body, the church, of which kind we may justly esteem the prece-

(o) Numb. xxiv. 17.

* Justin, in his history, speaking of Mithridates, tells us, that in the several years of his birth and accession to his kingdom, a comet shone with such lustre, as if the whole heavens had been a-fire ; lib. 37. c. 2. Lucan, in the description which he gives us of the civil wars of Rome, among the several prodigies which were seen both on earth and in heaven, reckons up this : —

—————Crimenque timendi

Sideris, et terris mutantem regna cometem. *Lib. 1.*

And Diodorus Siculus delivers it as a doctrine current among the Chaldeans, that the rising of comets is either beneficial or hurtful, not only to nations and states, but even to kings themselves, and sometimes to private persons ; *lib. 2. p. 116.*

(p) Le Clerc's Commentary, on Numb. xxiv. (q) Patrick's Commentary, *ibid.* (r) Grotius in Matth. i. 22.

A. M. ding prophecy. For though its primary aspect may be to-
 2515, &c. wards David, yet whoever considers it attentively shall per-
 Ant. Christ. ceive, that its ideas are too full to extend no farther, and
 1439, &c. must therefore, in a secondary and more exalted sense, re-
 from Numb. fer us to Christ, *whose kingdom ruleth over all, and to whom*
 xviii. to the *all things are put in subjection under its feet.*
 end of Deu-

In this sense the generality of Jews, as well as Christians, have all along understood it ; and it is no improbable conjecture, (* whatever some may think of it) that by the strength of this prophecy, kept upon record among the oriental archives, the magi of that country, at our Saviour's nativity, were directed to Jerusalem, and inquired, (s) *Where is the king of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the east ?* And, upon a farther supposition, that these very magi were descended from Balaam in a direct line, he might then, with propriety enough, pronounce of the Messiah, *I shall see him, i. e. see him in my posterity, but not now ; I shall behold him, but not near.*

And that of
 Moses.

The promise or prediction which God orders Moses to make to the Israelites, is this, (t) *I will raise them up a prophet, from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I command him.* Now, in order to discover wherein the similitude between Moses and this prophet was to consist, we must inquire into the particulars that distinguished Moses from the rest of the prophets ; and accordingly we find God himself, upon a small sedition that Aaron and his sister were engaged in against him, making this declaration in his favour : (u) *If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream ; but my servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all his house, with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches :* And what he means by speaking apparently, we find explained, when we are told, that (x) *the Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend.* This was the distinguishing character of Moses, and in this particular neither Joshua, nor any of the succeeding prophets could pretend to *be like unto him.* They never saw God's glorious presence, nor

* Witfius, in his Miscel. sacra, lib. i. 16. seems to explode this conjecture of Origen's, but no upon sufficient grounds.

(s) Matth. ii. 2. (t) Deut. xviii. 18. (u) Numb. xii. 6. &c. (x) Exod. xxxiii. 11.

heard

heard him speak distinctly. He did not converse familiarly with them, but whatever he had to communicate, he did it by way of visions, or dreams, or some dark and enigmatical expressions.

(y) They indeed had no special commission, no new institutes of religion to publish, nor had they usually any extraordinary credentials to produce. Their business, in short, was, to explain and inculcate the law which Moses gave, and even in this it is hardly supposable, that they were always infallibly directed, because it is said of several of them, that (z) *they erred in vision, and stumbled in judgement*. So that with no propriety can it be affirmed of them that *they were like Moses*, much less can that additional character belong to them, *I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him*, which certainly implies an extraordinary commission to publish something that was not revealed before.

But now, when it is said of the blessed Jesus, that he was (a) *a teacher sent from God*, for that no man could do the miracles which he did, *except God were with him*; that he came (b) *to declare God*, or (what is all one) to reveal a new religion, (c) *which was confirmed by signs, and mighty wonders*; and to qualify him for this, that he (d) *was from the beginning with God*, and, (e) *is in the bosom of the Father*: When it is expressly said, that he is (f) *the mediator of a new covenant in his blood, for the redemption of the transgressions of the former covenant*; and (g) *as Moses was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after*; so he, as a son, was faithful to him that appointed him, and was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, in as much as he, who hath built the house, hath more honour, than the house: When all this, I say, is affirmed and verified of Christ, it is manifest, that the great lines of the prophetic description we are now considering, in their true and primary sense, meet only in him, who is the express image of his Father, (b) *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom, and knowledge*. But to return to Balaam.

A. M.
2515, etc.
Ant. Chnif.
1489, &c.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

(y) Syke's Essay upon the truth of the Christian religion.
(z) Is. xxviii. 7. (a) John iii. 2. (b) John i. 18. (c) Acts ii. 22. (d) John i. 2. (e) Ver. 18. (f) Heb. viii. 6. (g) Heb. iii. 2. etc. (h) Col. ii. 3.

A. M.
2515, etc.
Ant. Chrif.
1489, etc.
from Num.
xxviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

Balak's de-
sign in fend-
ing for Ba-
laam.

Whatever opinion we may have of the matter, it is certain, that some of the wifest nations among the Heathens had a great conception of the power of their prophets, and thought that they were persons in high favour and esteem with their gods, who were always inclinable to listen to, and ratify either their benedictions or execrations. * The imprecations of these men (as (i) Plutarch informs us) were by the Romans held so very efficacious, that whoever was under them, could not possibly escape; and therefore we need not wonder, that, in conformity to this custom, we find Balak sending for *Balaam to come and curse the Israelites* for him, since it was his settled persuasion, (k) *that he whom he blessed, was blessed, and he whom he cursed, was cursed.*

Balaam's
wickedness;
God's anger
at him, but
wisdom in
permitting
him to go.

But though Balak acted according to the prevailing prejudice of that age in sending for Balaam, yet God had sufficient reason to be angry with him for going. He had once consulted God about cursing the people of Israel, and had received a very full and peremptory answer, forbidding him to go about it: *Thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed.* This reason however he kept to himself; for had he communicated it to the ambassadors at first, in all probability, they would not have importuned him anew to go: But his covetousness urged him on, and the rich

* The Romans were of opinion, that by a certain form of imprecation, they could demolish towns, and defeat whole armies of their enemies; and what the usual form for this purpose was, Macrobius has taken care to leave us in these words. "Dis pater, five Jovis mavis, five quo alio nomine fas est nominare, ut omnem illum urbem, exercitumque, quem ego me sentio dicere, fugâ, formidine, terrore, compleatis; quique adversus legiones, exercitumque nostrum, arma, telaque ferunt, uti vos eos exercitus, eos hostes, eosque homines, urbes, agrosque eorum, et qui in illis locis, regionibus, agris, urbibusque habitant, abducatis, lumine supremo privetis: Exercitibusque hostium, urbes, agrosque eorum, quos me sentio dicere, uti vos eas urbes, agrosque, capita, ætateque eorum devotas, consecrataque habeatis, illis legibus, quibus quandoque sunt maxime hostes devoti: Eosque ego vicarios, pro me, fide, magistratuque meo, et populo Romano, exercitibus, legionibusque nostris, do, devoveo, ut me, meamque fidem, imperiumque, legiones, exercitumque nostrum, qui in his rebus gerundis sunt, bene salvos finatis esse. Si hæc ita faxitis, ut ego sciam, sentiam, intelligamque, tum quisquis votum hoc faxit, rectè factum esto, ovibus atris tribus, Telus mater, teque, Jupiter, obtestor;" *Saturn. l. 3. r. 9.*

(i) In vita Crassi, p. 553. (k) Numb. xxii. 6.

presents

presents and promises, which the messengers the second time brought, began to operate so very powerfully, that he forgot his reverence to the divine Majesty, and presumed once more to consult him about going.

Upon this occasion the sacred historian relates the matter thus. ——— (l) *And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them: And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab, and God's anger was kindled because he went.* What, angry for what himself commanded him to do? (m) Our translators indeed thus render the text; but the Hebrew words are clear of this absurdity; for they tell us, that God's anger *was kindled*, not *ci halak*, because he went, but *ci halak hua*, because *he went of himself*, i. e. without staying for Balak's messengers to come in the morning to call him. He had told them over night, that an *house full of silver and gold* could not tempt him to go counter to what God should direct him to do; and by this vaunting speech they very possibly might think their master's offers neglected; and be tempted to go away next morning without him; but so full were his head and heart of expectations from the journey, that he would not run the hazard of their calling; but rose up early in the morning, went himself to them, which was acting directly contrary to God's express order, for which reason he sent his *angel to stand in his way for an adversary against him*. By the mouth of his angel, however, God permitted him to go, as knowing very well that his journey would tend to his confusion; and the manifestation of his people's glory. For though there was nothing but malice in the prophet's heart, and a fixed determination to do all the harm he could to the Israelites; yet God, by his overruling providence, directed his words so, as to make, them, upon every essay to curse, pregnant with blessings. Had not God forbidden the prophet to go upon his first application for leave, he had not declared his aversion to Balak's wicked project: Had he not allowed him to go upon his farther importunity, he had not exposed his folly and madness, as well as the weakness of his magical arts, so effectually: But now, in the wise method which he took, he defeated the designs

A. M.
2515, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1489, etc.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

(l) Numb. xxii. 20. etc. (m) Shuckford's Connection, vol. 3. lib. 12.

A. M. 2515, &c. Ant. Christ. 1489, &c. from Num. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy.

of the wicked, and *made the wrath of man to praise him*; he hath shewn us, that no enchantments, no machinations can prevail, where he undertakes to protect; (n) and has left us this lesson of instruction, "That when men are foolish and self-willed, and in the pursuit of their corrupt views, will follow their own ways, notwithstanding many kind hints and admonitions to the contrary, God then abandons them to their own imaginations, which, in the event very frequently prove their ruin."

How God might make Balaam's ass speak.

It cannot be denied indeed, but that God gave Balaam sundry admonitions, not to follow, in this headstrong manner, the pursuit of his avarice. His injoining him not to go, when the princes of Moab first came for him; his sending an angel in the road to rebuke him for his rash and unadvised proceedings; and when he was come to Balak, his overruling his words upon three different attempts, and making him pronounce what was least of all his intention, were sufficient remembrancers, that his ways could not possibly be right before God. But of all others, the speaking of his ass was such a miraculous incident, as would have made any considering man, one would think, retract his purpose.

This indeed is so wonderful an instance, that several of the Jewish doctors, who, upon other occasions, are fond enough of miracles, seem as if they would hardly be induced to assent to this. Philo, in his life of Moses, passes it over in silence; and (o) Maimonides pretends, that it only happened to Balaam in a prophetic vision. An inspired writer in the New Testament assures us, that it was a real fact, as Moses relates it. Moses says, that *the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam*; and St. Peter tells us, that the ass, *speaking with a man's voice, forbade the madness of the prophet*; an human voice came out of the mouth of an ass; but I do not apprehend, that this voice proceeded from her own sentiments. Her tongue was miraculously moved, not by any power of hers so to move it, and it spake what it was moved to utter, without any connection of her words and sentiments, and without her understanding the very words she uttered upon this occasion. This seems to have been the fact, and the severest philosophy, I hope, cannot deny, that God is as able to make creatures, destitute of understanding, pro-

(n) Scripture Vindicated. part 2. part 2. c. 24.

(o) More Nevocha.

nounce articulate and rational words, as it is for a musician, by the different touches he gives any instrument, to make it express a variety of notes.

It may seem a little strange indeed, that Balaam should shew no kind of surprise, when he heard his ass speak like an human creature : But to this (p) some reply, That Balaam might probably have imbibed the doctrine of *transmigration of souls*, (which was certainly very common in the east), and from thence might be less astonished to hear any brute speak ; whereas (q) others suppose, that he was in such a rage and fury at the supposed perverseness of his beast *crushing his foot, and falling down under him*, that for the present, he could think of nothing else ; tho' the conciseness of Moses's narration, that must be presumed to have omitted many circumstances, which, if rightly known, would dispel this, and many more difficulties, that may be imagined in this transaction, does certainly furnish us with a better and more satisfactory answer. For, (r) tho' we could not assign a sufficient reason why God thought fit to work this miracle, yet who shall therefore dare to infer that it was never wrought ? The account which we have here even of the most ancient times, is very short ; nor can we rightly form a judgment what the prevailing sentiments of the world might be, in the age when Balaam lived. The counsels of God are likewise a great deep, nor can any man so far penetrate into them, as to pronounce what is proper or improper for him to do. Upon this occasion, however, there seems to be some reason for his giving the ass the faculty of speech, viz. that thereby he might convince the princes of Moab, (who are supposed to be in company with Balaam), how easy a thing it was for him, who had opened the mouth of this dumb creature, to stop that of its owner, or to direct his words to what purposes he pleased ; and (s) how weak and impotent was the man in whom they confided, when, with all his curses and imprecations, he could not get the better of a poor brute, and much less then of the people, so immediately under the divine protection.

The Scripture indeed informs us, that after his fruitless negotiation with Balak, (t) *he returned to his own place* :

(p) Vid. Le Clerc's Commentary. (q) Vid. Patrick's Commentary *in locum*. (r) Le Clerc's Commentary in Numb. xxiii. (s) Bibliotheca Bibl. in Numb. xxii. (t) Ibid. in Numb. xxiv. 14, 25.

And

A. M.
2515, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1489, etc.
from Numb.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.
Why Ba-
laam might
not be asto-
nished at it.

How Ba-
laam came
to be slain
among the
Midianites.

A. M. 2515, etc. Ant. Chris. 1489, etc. from Numb. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy. And so he might return to Mesopotamia, and yet when he heard of the success of his advice against the Israelites, and how many thousand of them had been cut off in consequence of it, he might go back again to the Midianites, in hopes of obtaining an ample reward for his services; or when war was declared against them, the Midianites themselves might possibly send for him again, and he be the rather inclined to go, because now he might have some hopes of cursing the Israelites with success, since they had apostatised from the worship of their God, and fallen into idolatry, which while they stood clear of, he knew he would not be permitted to do; and it is not unlikely, that for this purpose he was carried into the field of battle, and there became a sacrifice to his own evil policy.

In what sense God is said to swear.

It is a sad perversion of the sense of Scripture, when God, in condescension to our capacities, is pleased to make use of human words and phrases, to account that condescension, not only an impropriety of speech, but a disparagement likewise to the divine nature and perfections. The Scripture indeed makes mention of God's *swearing in his wrath*; but who would ever think, that the form of this expression should give any disgust, or (*u*) the sense of it be thought repugnant to the natural notions we have of God? He that at all considers the end and intent of an oath, must allow it to be a solemn asseveration, made as strong and binding as possible, in order to beget faith and confidence in others, or to procure a sure belief of what is so affirmed. When men swear, nothing can make their asseveration so strong and binding, as the invocation of God to be their witness or avenger: And in like manner, when God himself is said to swear, we are to suppose, that he enforces and strengthens his asseveration as much as possible, or as much as is proper, to beget the highest truth and confidence in his revelations, not by invoking a superiour, (for that, we may say, is not in his power), but by condescending to make use of human forms of swearing, with such proper alterations as the case requires. Thus, when God swears (*x*) by himself, or (*y*) by his great name, or (*z*) by his life, or (*a*) by his right-hand, or (*b*) by his holiness, or (*c*) by his truth, or (*d*) his excellency, or any other of his

(*u*) Christianity as old as the creation, p. 250. (*x*) Gen. xxii. 16. (*y*) Jer. xlv. 26. (*z*) Ibid. li. 14. (*a*) Isa. lxii. 8. (*b*) Amos iv. 2. (*c*) Psal. lxxxix. 49. (*d*) Amos viii. 7.

attributes or perfections, the meaning of these expressions is much the same, *viz.* that he thereby declares the thing to be as certain, and as surely to be depended on, as his own being or attributes are. This, I say, is the whole purport of the thing; and God is therefore said to make use of this manner of speaking, only because it is more awful and solemn, and consequently apt to make deeper impressions, and beget a stronger confidence in the hearers, than a naked declaration can.

It is the manner of the Scripture to ascribe to God hands, eyes, and feet; but the design is not, that we should believe that he has any of these members according to the literal signification; but only that he has a power to execute all those acts, to which these members in us are so very subservient. It is the manner of the same Scripture, to represent him as affected with the like passions that we feel in ourselves, when we are angry or pleased, have our hearts attendered, or provoked to revenge; and yet, upon reflection, we cannot think that any of these passions are inherent in the divine nature; but the meaning only is, (*e*) that God will as certainly punish the wicked, as if he were inflamed with the passion of anger or revenge; and as infallibly relieve or reward the good, as we will those for whom we have tender compassion, or affectionate love. So that it is only by way of analogy and comparison, that the nature and passions of men are ascribed to God; and therefore certainly when he is pleased to express himself in accommodation to our capacities, (instead of making it a matter of cavil and reproach), we ought to be thankful for his condescension, and to interpret his words in a sense suitable to his divine Majesty.

It cannot be denied indeed, but that the utter extirpation of the Canaanites carries a face of rigour and severity, not so very consistent with God's frequent declarations of his mercy and long-suffering; but then it should be considered, that as he is full of lenity and mercy to those that endeavour to please him, so he has thought fit to declare, with the same breath, that he will (*f*) *by no means clear the guilty*. Let us then see how the case stood between God and these nations, when the Israelites were sent to dispossess them.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Chriſt.
1489 &c.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
ter. nomy.

What by
his being in
wrath.

God's extir-
pation of
the Canaan-
ites vindi-
cated.

(*e*) Bishop King's sermon of divine pred. (*f*) Numb. xiv. 18-

There

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

There is no question to be made, but that most of these people had at first the true worship of God instituted amongst them, and that their several progenitors took care to leave behind them worthy conceptions of him; but notwithstanding this, in the days of Moses we find their notions so corrupted, and all kinds of idolatry so publicly established, that the land is said to have been defiled with them, and like a stomach overcharged with unwholesome diet, to have nauseated, (g) *and spued them up.*

In denouncing the sentence of their excision, therefore, (h) *Ye shall smite them and utterly destroy them, and save alive nothing that breatheth,* God intimates the reason of his severity by the enumeration of these particulars; (i) *Ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their statues, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire;* even the images of Chemosh, and Peor, and Moloch, and other detestable idols, to whom they are said to have offered human sacrifices and to have (k) *made their seed pass through the fire.* Nor was their idolatry less provoking, than the corruption of their morals, since adultery and bestiality of all kinds, incest, and all manner of uncleanness they both avowedly practised, and (l) *took pleasure in those that did them.*

The Midianitish women in particular, by prostituting their bodies, in order to draw the young Israelites into idolatry, had given sufficient evidence of their incorrigible attachment to wickedness, and how impossible it would be for the people whom God had selected from the rest of the world, to preserve their integrity, if these, and such like public seducers, were permitted to live among them; and therefore God assigns this, as another reason for their extirpation: (m) *Because thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and he hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that be upon the face of the earth; (n) therefore shalt thou consume all the people, which the Lord thy God shall deliver into thy hands: Thine eyes shall have no pity upon them, lest they turn thee away from following me, to serve other gods, which will surely be a snare unto thee.*

Now, if either the incorrigible wickedness of any people, or the danger of their corrupting others by their en-

(g) Lev. xviii. 28. (h) Deut. vii. 2.; and xx. 16. (i) Ibid. vii. 5. (k) Lev. xviii. 21. (l) Rom. i. 32. (m) Deut. vii. 6. (n) Ibid. vii. 16.; and Exod. xxiii. 33.

ticements and bad examples, may be deemed a sufficient reason (as it is in all civil governments, to cut off obnoxious members) for God to rid himself of any nation, that has incurred his highest displeasure, the Israelites, who were only instruments in God's hands, are no more to be blamed for executing the Almighty's commands, than the person who apprehends a malefactor, and brings him to condign punishment, is to be thought culpable by the laws of the land. And though the malefactor may possibly plead for himself, that he never did the apprehender, or even the executioner, any wrong; yet this will be of no weight or significance to the magistrate, when he calls upon the inferior officer to do his duty. (o) Do but then allow the high and mighty magistrate of heaven and earth as much right, as his deputies have that act under him, and a judgment sufficient to determine what concerns the public good; and then certainly the Israelites, acting by his orders, had at least as clear a right to destroy the Canaanites, as any executioner can have to take away life by command of authority.

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teronomy.

There is something perhaps, that we may think more affecting in the case of the innocent children, which fell in this common devastation; but then we are to consider, that as the lives of all mankind are in the hands of God that gave them, so may he demand them back again, when, or in what manner, he pleases; and as well may we quarrel with his providence, for sending a destroying angel armed with a famine, a deluge, or a pestilence, which sweep away young and old together, as we may with his deputing the Hebrews to be the agents of his high behests, in a general and promiscuous slaughter of such nations, as his divine justice and wisdom had predestinated to destruction.

The Jews, it must be owned, have several rules of life, and customs peculiar to themselves, and by a rigorous observance of these, they contracted among other nations the character of being a sullen and unsociable people, haters of the rest of mankind, and averse to all civil society and commerce. Thus Manetho, as he is quoted (p) by Grotius, lays this heavy charge upon them, "That they would hold no manner of correspondence with any mortal that was not initiated into their religion." Tacitus

That the
Jews did
not refuse
commerce
with other
nations.

(o) Scripture Vindicated, part 2. (p) Annot. in Deut. vii.

A. M. 2515, &c. Ant. Christ. 1429, &c. from Num. xviii, to the end of Deuteronomy.

says of them, "That though they are courteous enough to one another, yet they pursue foreigners with the utmost rage of exasperated enemies." And (to name no more) Diodorus relates, "That they were the only people in the world who rejected all commerce and friendship with foreigners ; and not only so, but treated them as enemies."

But all this must certainly be a gross mistake, because the law of Moses expressly commands those that live under it, to do good to mankind in general : not only to love their neighbours, (q) but to *love the stranger* likewise, and in *no case* (r) to vex or oppress him, for this very reason, *because they were strangers in the land of Egypt* : And therefore Josephus, in his book (s) against Appion, tells us, that tho' their lawgiver would not admit those who came occasionally only to the solemnities of their religion : yet, among other things, these he enjoyed as necessary, and almost essential clauses in his law, *viz. to supply every one with fire, water, and provisions, that was in want, and to direct the traveller in the road* ; which plainly contradicts the representation which the * Roman Satirist thought fit to give of them.

If we consult the practice of the first founders of the Jewish nation, we shall find Abraham (t) making an alliance with Abimelech, King of Gerar, at Beerseba, and assisting even the impious Sodomites, when he thought them unjustly invaded by their enemies : We shall find Isaac (u) entering into a covenant with the same, or another king of the same name, at the same place ; and Jacob signing articles of agreement with Laban, (x) his father-in-law. Nor can we think, that the promulgation of the Jewish ordinances made any alteration in this particular, or laid any restraint upon their votaries from joining in treaties of commerce, or any other negotiations that tended to the benefit of human society. For, had this been the case, we cannot conceive how (y) both David and Solomon could have ventured to make a league with Hiram, King of Tyre, without offending God ; which they were so far from doing, that Solomon in particular (as (z) the sacred history informs us) was directed by *that wisdom, which he received*

(q) Deut. x. 19. (r) Exod. xxii. 21. (s) Lib. 2.

* Non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti,

Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos. *Juv. Sat. 14.*

(t) Gen. xxi. 22. (u) Ibid. xxvi. 28. (x) Ibid. xxxi. 44.

(y) 2 Sam. v. 11. (z) 1 Kings v. 12.

from God, when he made his confederacy with this Hea- then prince. A. M. 2515, etc. Ant. Christ. 1489, etc.

Excepting then those several people, whom God had appointed the Israelites, at their entrance into Canaan, to destroy, and some other kings and nations afterwards, against whom he had sent out his prophets to denounce his vengeance for their sad impieties, the Jews were forbidden to maintain a civil intercourse with none; but, on the contrary, were frequently excited to use kindness and hospitality to aliens, as well as others, that all the world might see, (as (a) Josephus puts the words into Solomon's mouth, at the dedication of the temple), "That the Hebrews were not so inhumane, as to envy strangers the common dispensations of the author and fountain of all our happiness."

And for this very reason, (b) I am confident it was that the Hebrews are so often reminded by God of their having been strangers and bond-slaves in the land of Egypt, that by their hospitality and charity, they might comfort and relieve those who were in the like condition: that (in the words of the prophet), (c) *they might draw out their soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; that they might bring the poor that were cast out, to their houses; cover the cold and naked, and not hide themselves from their own flesh.* For this cause are they so frequently called upon, (in the words of the same prophet), (d) *to look unto the rock whence they were hewn, and to the whole of the pit whence they were digged, to look unto Abraham their father, and to Sarah that bare them;* that the happy change of their circumstances might beget in them a perpetual gratitude to their great benefactor, and the obscurity of their origin teach them to be humble. Why they are so often put in mind of their bondage in Egypt, etc.

It is part of the admonition of Moses to the Israelites, (e) *Thou shalt remember all the way, which the Lord thy God led thee, these forty years, in that terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, and whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no.* What restrained the serpents, which were so numerous in the wilderness, from stinging the Hebrews, was doubtless that great and sovereign being, who resided in the pillar of the cloud, to cover the camp in their march, and make every noxious Why the serpents in the wilderness did not hurt the Israelites sooner.

(a) Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2. (b) Vid. Exod. xxii. 21.; Lev. xxv. 42, 55.; and Deut. x. 19. (c) Isaiah. lviii. 10. 7. (d) Ibid. li. 1. 2. (e) Deut. viii. 2.

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creature flee before them. (*f*) Several authors are of opinion, that the serpents which bit the Israelites, were of the flying kind, and might be called *fiery*, by reason of their colour. Herodotus informs us, that Arabia produced this sort of serpents in great abundance; and the time of the year wherein the Israelites were under this calamity, was in the season when these creatures usually are upon the wing, to visit the neighbouring and adjacent countries; and might now be directed into the camp of the Israelites as a great army; (for so God (*g*) calls *the locust, the canker-worm, the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm, his great army*), to destroy and depopulate without controul. For however the divine presence had protected them before, the people were now in a state of rebellion; they were murmuring at the tediousness of their journeyings, and at their want of provisions, though every day fed by Providence at the expence of a miracle. So that God being angry with them, had removed their heavenly safeguard; and no sooner was it removed, but things were left to their natural course. The serpents resumed their venom; and (*h*) as it was now in the heat of summer, when creatures of this kind are naturally most poisonous, they raised such sores, and sudden inflammations wherever they fell, as occasioned death in some of the most guilty, and violent pains in all, until God was pleased to provide them with a remedy of a nature somewhat extraordinary.

Why God
appointed a
brazen ser-
pent to be
erected.

Whether the sight of brass, (as some naturalists say), be hurtful or no in such cases, this is certainly a prescription of physicians, that such people as are bitten with any venomous beast, should be kept from the sight of the very image of the beast from which they received such hurt: And therefore God might take occasion, from the incongruity of the means, to magnify his own power, making use of this kind of remedy, that the Israelites might know and be convinced, that both the disease and medicine came from him. When our blessed Saviour cured the blind man in the gospel, *he spit on the ground, and made clay, and spread it all over his eyes*, which some standards-by might be apt to believe was a likelier way to put them quite out, than to recover them: but when they saw the thing have its effect, they glorified God, and said, (*i*) *How can*

(*f*) Shuckford's Connection, vol. iii. lib. 12. (*g*) Joel ii. 25.
(*h*) Patrick's Comment. on Numb. xx (*i*) John ix. 16.

a man that is a sinner do such miracles? Because they could not but perceive, that it was a greater miracle to work the cure by incompetent or incongruous means, than by none at all. And in like manner, if instead of setting up this brazen serpent upon a pole, God had ordered the Israelites to apply a leaf of any common herb to the bite of these poisonous serpents, (as he did Hezekiah to *(k)* lay a lump of figs for a plaster upon his boil), the cure might have been the same; but then the singularity of it had not been so remarkable. Men might have imputed it to some secret virtue in the plant, which now can be ascribed to nothing but the superlative power of God, who, even by contrary means, can bring about what ends he pleases.

The design of those men however can hardly be good, who to rob God of the glory of the cure, would impute it to some secret quality in the brazen serpent itself. *(l)* A talisman, which (according to the common account) is a certain piece of metal, made under the influence of such and such planets and constellations, with a wonderful power to beget love, and overcome enemies; to drive away noxious animals, and cure diseases, &c. is a chimerical notion; and *(m)* to resemble the figure which God appointed Moses to set up, or any of these vain devices, is a scheme that † deserves our scorn, more than our confutation. The author of the book of Wisdom, addressing himself to God; and speaking of the Israelites, has imputed the virtue of this serpent to its true cause. *(n)* *He that turned himself towards it, was not healed by the thing which he saw, but by thee, who art the Saviour of all.* And accordingly,

(k) Isaiah xxxviii. 21. *(l)* Saurin's Dissertations. *(m)* Le Clerc's Comment. on the 21st of Numbers.

† Sir John Marsham has collected several passages from the profane writers, which hint at charms and enchantments to cure the bite of serpents; and he says the Hebrews made use of enchantments for this very purpose: which assertion he endeavours to support by a citation from Psal. lvii. 4. 5.; by another from Ecclesiastes, chap. x. 8; and by a third from Jeremiah, chap. viii. 17. and from the whole of what he offers, he would intimate, that the cure of the Israelites was not miraculous, but that the brazen-serpent was properly a charm for the calamity, or an amulet for the distemper; but it would be trifling to refute this opinion; *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. 3. lib. 12.

(u) Wild. xvi. 7.

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teronomy.

in the foregoing verse, he calls it *a sign, or symbol of salvation, to put them in remembrance of the commandment of the law.*

The only considerable difficulty in the whole transaction is, why God, who had forbidden all manner of images, should, on this occasion, command one to be made. This the Jewish doctors (as † Justin Martyr observes in his days), could give no account of: But had they known Jesus Christ, and him crucified, they might have soon perceived, (o) that God intended it for a type of the death of Christ, and the manner in which he was to die; and that the effects of the brazen serpent upon them who looked on it, did represent the virtue received by true believers from the death of their Redeemer. For so we find our Saviour himself applying the mysterious meaning of it: (p) *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up; that whoso believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life.*

Thus we have answered the several doubts and objections that have been made to that part of the history of Moses which includes this period of time: And if the attestation of profane writers may be thought any confirmation of what has been said, we have the practice of most subsequent law-givers, in imitation of this great Jewish leader, pretending to a familiarity with some fictitious deity or other, and thence deriving their institutions: And whoever compares the sacred and fabulous account of things together, will find a near resemblance between Aaron and the Heathen Mercury; and that as this false deity is said to have been an Egyptian by birth, the messenger and interpreter of the gods, and is generally painted with a *caduceus*, or wand in his hand twisted about with snakes; so Aaron was himself born in Egypt, and appointed by God to be (q) an interpreter to his brother Moses, and a messenger to Pharaoh and the Egyptians, in whose presence he threw down his wonder-working rod, and immediately it became a serpent.

‡ In his book against Trypho, he insists upon this serpent as a type of Christ, and appealing to the company, what reason (exclusive of that) could be given of this matter, one of the Jews confessed that he was in the right, and that he himself had inquired for a reason among the Jewish masters, and could meet with none; *Kidder's Demonstration*, p. 73.

(o) Kidder, *ibid.* (p) John. iii. 14, 15. (q) Exod. vii. 1, 2.

The whole history of Balaam, (as romantic as it seems), is still upon record in the ancient oriental writers, from whence the present Mahometans have borrowed many things. It is not improbable, that the speaking of his ass gave handle to the fiction of several other brute creatures, upon less momentous occasions, accosting their masters. That the deserts wherein the Israelites journeyed, were infested with serpents of so venomous a kind, that their biting was deadly, and above the power of art to cure, both Strabo and Diodorus testify. And (to instance no farther) the worship of *Æsculapius*, the known god of phyfic, under the form of a serpent, and what some late travellers tell us of the Indians carrying about a wreathed serpent, upon a pearch, to which they pay their adorations every morning, had manifestly their original from some tradition or other of this serpent's image, which Moses was directed to set up. So true is the character (confirmed by testimonies of all kinds) which the sacred writers give us of this Moses, the servant of the Lord, that both as the leader, the law-giver, and historian of his people, (r) *he was found faithful in all his house.*

A. M.
2515, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1489, etc.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

DISSERTATION III.

Of the Profane History, Religion, Government. &c. of such Nations as the Israelites had Dealings with during this Period.

TOWARDS the conclusion of the foregoing book, we carried the succession of the Egyptian kings down to the reign of Amenophis, who (according to the most received accounts) was that obstinate prince, that, in pursuit of the Hebrews, together with all his army, was lost in the waves of the Red-sea: Nor should we, as yet, concern ourselves any farther with the history of that nation, but that his son and successor, Sesostris, † who lived in the time of the Israelites

(r) Heb. iii. 5.

† It is a matter of no small dispute among chronologers, in what time it was this Sesostris lived. The seeming analogy of the name makes Sir John Marsham think, that Sesostris was the same with Shishak, king of Egypt, who, in the days of Rehoboam, came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, the treasures of the king's house, and all the shields which Solomon had made, &c. 1 Kings xiv. 25, 26. What confirms

A. M. 2515, &c. Ant. Christ. 1489, &c. from Numb. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy.

Israelites peregrination in the wilderness, and may therefore properly take his place here, was a person of so distinguished a character, that to pass him by in silence, would be doing an injury to our reader.

As

confirms him in this opinion, is a passage in Josephus, wherein he tells us, that " God avenged himself upon Rehoboam, by the hand of Shishak, King of Egypt, concerning whom Herodotus (being mistaken) ascribes what he did to Sesostris; *Jewish Antiq. lib. 8. c. 4.* But what if, in this matter, Josephus himself should be mistaken, and not Herodotus? Josephus certainly took his antiquities from the records of the Jews, which gave a full account of what happened to Abraham and his posterity, both before and after they inherited the land of Canaan; but gave no account at all of that country while it was in other hands, and particularly while the Israelites were in the wilderness: And therefore it is more probable, that Josephus knew of no conquest of the land of Canaan by the Egyptians, before the time of Rehoboam. For when he applies what Herodotus says of Sesostris's setting up several infamous pillars, to stigmatize the countries, which he conquered, for cowardice to Shishak, after his expedition against the Jews, he plainly gives us to understand, that he knew of no other expedition from Egypt against the land of Canaan before that. And indeed these very pillars are enough to decide the matter, that our Sesostris was not Shishak. Shishak made an irruption into Judea, plundered the temple and the country, and so went back again into Egypt. Now, had he set up such pillars, as a perpetual mark of infamy upon the Jews, can we imagine, that they would have let them stand, even to be seen in Herodotus's time, and not immediately pulled down upon his retreat? But, on the other hand, if Sesostris who succeeded the Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red-sea, conquered Canaan, and set up such pillars, there is good reason to think, that they might continue a long while, because the Canaanites, who were a conquered people, dared not pull them down in his reign, and in the time of the deputies, who governed under him; and the Israelites, who knew that these pillars were no reflection on them, but only on their enemies, would be inclineable enough to let them stand. It is much more probable then, that the mistake belongs to Josephus, and not to Herodotus; because Herodotus, in what he asserts of Sesostris, agrees with Diodorus and others: but to fix the actions of Sesostris upon Shishak, there is no one ancient author that will agree with Josephus. Aristotle asserts, (*Polit. lib. 1. c. 10.*) that the kingdom of Sesostris was much older in point of time, than that of Minos in Crete, which every one owns was in the time of Joshua. Pliny maintains, (*Nat. Hist. lib. 37. c. 8.*), that Troy was taken in the time of Rameses, who was the third descendant from Sesostris.

Strabo

Chap. III. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 63

As soon as Sesostris was born, some historians tell us, that Vulcan appeared to his father in his sleep, and informed him, that his son should conquer the whole world: upon which presumption it was, that he took so much care not of his education only, but of every male child's likewise, that was born on the same day with him, even through all his kingdom of Egypt. The number of these is said to have amounted to seventeen hundred in all; and the king gave orders, that they should be trained up in the same discipline and exercises with his son, as justly supposing, that they who had been the constant and equal companions of his childhood and youth, would prove his most faithful ministers, and affectionate fellow-soldiers. (r) Having therefore provided tutors and masters, and every thing necessary for this purpose, he had them, by degrees, inured to laborious and manly exercises, as well as instructed in all liberal and useful sciences, that as they grew up, by the strength of their bodies, and the cultivation of their minds, they might be equally fitted either to command or execute.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant Christ.
1489, &c.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu.
teronomy.
The life of
Sesostris,

Amenophis, after he had been at this vast expence and trouble in laying the foundation of his son's future grandeur, resolved to give him and his companions an opportunity of displaying the good effects of their education; and accordingly sent him, and them along with him, at

Strabo avers, (lib. ult.) that Sesostris was long before the Trojan times; and Sir John Marsham, and in general all the writers of the Argonautic expedition, own plainly, that the colonies of Sesostris had been at Colchis before that, which all agree to have been a century before the fall of Troy. And (if to these we may add two moderns) both the learned Prelate Usher, and the learned Bishop Cumberland, do unanimously agree, in making Sesostris to be the son of that Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red sea; which the latter of these has given several arguments to prove; *Sancho. p. 402.* But these the learned author of *the Connection of the Sacred and Profane History* has endeavoured to invalidate; and thereupon concludes, "That Sesostris should be the son of Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red sea, and that in the state which his father's misfortunes must have reduced Egypt, he should immediately find strength sufficient to subdue kingdom after kingdom, and to erect himself a large empire over many great and flourishing nations; this must be thought, by any one who duly considers things, to seem, at first sight, a most romantic fiction:" *vol. 3. lib. 11.*

(r) The chief of this account is taken from Diodorus Siculus, and Herodotus, in his *Euterpe*, lib. 1,

A. M. the head of an army into Arabia. In this expedition, the
 2515, etc. young Sesostris surmounted all the dangers of serpents and
 Ant. Chrii. venomous creatures, all the wants and hardships of a dry
 1489, etc. and barren country, and, in the end, conquered the Ara-
 from Num. bians, a rude and barbarous people, that had never been
 xviii. to the vanquished before.
 end of Deu-
 teronomy.

From Arabia his father ordered him westward, where he subdued the greatest part of Africa ; but while he was engaged in this expedition, news was brought him, that his father and all his army were drowned in the Red sea, which made him desist from his conquests, and hasten home with his army, in order to secure his succession to the kingdom. Whether it was that he called to mind the prediction of the god Vulcan, or was instructed by Mercury, who prepared him for the war ; was assured of success by divination, by dreams in the temple, or prodigies in the air, or persuaded to it by his daughter Athyrte, a young lady of uncommon understanding, and who made it out to her father, that the thing was practicable ; but so it was, that no sooner was he settled upon the Egyptian throne, but his thoughts began to swell, and his mind to grasp at an universal monarchy.

His own country indeed he found but in a lamentable estate. The Israelites, who were their slaves, were gone : All their veteran soldiers, with their arms, chariots, and horses, were lost : The first-born of every family were slain, the cattle killed, the fruit of the earth destroyed, and nothing but famine was to be expected : And yet, notwithstanding all this discouragement, he was resolved to put in practice his scheme for a general conquest. But then considering that this would oblige him to be long absent, and far distant from Egypt, he could not but deem it necessary to gain the love and affection of his subjects, that these who followed him might lay down their lives more cheerfully in his service, and they whom he left behind, might not be induced to attempt any innovations while he was gone.

To this purpose he endeavoured, in the first place, to oblige every one, to the utmost of his power ; some by largesses in money ; others by donations in land ; many by the concession of free pardons ; and every one by fair speeches, and a courteous and affable behaviour upon all occasions. Those that were condemned for high-treason, he released with impunity, and by paying what they owed, discharged

discharged such as were in prison for debt. In the next place, he resettled the ancient division of the country into six and thirty parts, which the Egyptians called *Nomi*, or *provinces*; assigned a governor to each of these; and constituted his brother Armais, (whom the Greeks called *Danaus*) supreme regent. Him he invested with ample power and authority: But restrained him from wearing the crown, from offering any injury to the queen and her family, and from having any dealings with the royal concubines.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.
from Numb.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

Having thus settled the government, he proceeded, in the last place, to raise an army equal to the vastness of his design, which consisted of 600,000 foot, 24,000 horse, and 27,000 warlike chariots. His principal officers were taken out of those brave men who were trained up with him in martial exploits; and that they might always be in readiness, (without submitting to any mean employ) to attend him to the wars, he took care to bestow on them large estates in land, in some of the richest and most fertile parts of Egypt. With this army he marched at first against the Ethiopians, whom he soon conquered, and made them pay a tribute of ebony, gold, and elephants teeth. But his land-forces alone were not answerable to the conquests he intended; and therefore he fitted out two fleets of tall ships, somewhat resembling our modern form, one in the Mediterranean sea, and the other in the Arabian gulf. With the Mediterranean squadron he conquered Cyprus, the sea-coasts of Phœnicia, and several of the Cyclades; and from the Arabian gulf, he sailed into the Indian sea, and there subdued all the coasts thereof, till happening to come into a shallow, and his ships drawing more water than usual, he either was unable, or afraid to go any farther, and so returned into Egypt.

But he had not been long returned, before his ambition began to operate afresh; and therefore, advising with his priests, he recruited his army, and marched into Asia. The Israelites were, at this time, in the deserts of Arabia; and therefore it may look a little strange, why a man of Sesostris's spirit should not have been tempted to pursue them. But besides the barrenness of the country, which could never support so vast a multitude as he carried with him, he could not but reflect on his father's fate: And therefore, dreading the like miraculous overthrow, he de-

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Chris
1480, &c.
from Numb.
xviii. to the
end of D. u
teronomy.

clined the Israelites, and marched directly against Canaan, which, without the least opposition, at once submitted to him: so that, imposing an annual tribute upon the people, and putting governours in all their principal towns, he proceeded in the course of his conquests, and in a short time, overran all Asia, and some part of Europe.

He passed the river Ganges, and pierced through all India, as far as the main ocean eastward: Then * he subdued the Scythians, as far as the river Tanais, which divides Europe from Asia: Here he brought into subjection the other parts of Asia; and from hence he went into Thrace in Europe; but as he was marching along the deserts, he was in danger of losing his army through the want of provisions, and difficulty of passes; and therefore † erecting (as his custom was) his pillars there, he adventured to proceed no farther: Though the occasion of

* Though Herodotus, Diodorus, and others, do relate, that he was victorious in these countries; yet some will have it, that he met with a repulse, fled from the Scythians, and was worsted by the Colchians. For Justin tells us that Vexoris, or Sesostris, dispatched ambassadors before him to summon the Scythians to surrender, they sent back his messengers with contempt, and threats, and defiance, and immediately took up arms: that Sesostris being informed that they were advancing towards him by hasty marches, suddenly turned about, and fled from before them, leaving all his baggage and warlike apparel to the pursuers, who followed him till he came on the borders of Egypt; *lib. 2. cap. 3.* Pliny relates, (*lib. 33. cap. 3.*) that he was overthrown by the King of Colchis; and Valerius Flaccus insinuates, that he was repulsed with great slaughter, and put to flight in these parts; *Argonaut, lib. 5.*

† It was the custom of this great warrior, to set up pillars in every country he conquered, with an inscription to this effect,—*Sesostris, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, subdued this country by the power of his arms.* If the nation had, without opposition, ignobly submitted to him, besides the inscription, he caused the privities of a woman to be carved, as a mark of their effeminacy and baseness; but if they had defended themselves bravely, the pillars bore the distinction of the contrary sex, in testimony of their courage. Besides these, he left statues of himself behind him, two of which were to be seen in Herodotus's time, one on the road between Ephesus and Phocæa, and the other between Smyrna and Sardis. They were armed after the Ethiopian and Egyptian manner; held a javelin in one hand, and a bow in the other; and across the breast, had a line drawn from shoulder to shoulder, in which was this inscription;—*This region I obtained by these my soldiers;* Universal History, *lib. 1. c. 3.*

Ch. III. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 61

his return may rather be imputed to the news which he received from the Egyptian high priest, of his brother's revolt and usurpation.

For, encouraged with his long absence, and great distance, Armais had done every thing that was interdicted him: Had assumed the diadem, violated the queen, made promiscuous use of the king's concubines, and, by the advice of his false friends, was now meditating to maintain his usurpation by force of arms: But hearing of his brother's return, he feigns himself of another temper; meets him at Pelusium, a frontier-town, before he could have certain intelligence of what had passed; and there received him with all the appearance of submission and joy, but with a real design, not only to take away his life, but quite extirpate his whole family. To this end he invited the king, his brother, the queen, and her children, to a banquet, which he had prepared for their refreshment; but when they had all drank very plentifully, and were now gone to rest, he caused a great quantity of dried reeds, which he had before prepared for that purpose, to be laid round the king's pavilion, and set on fire, in hopes to destroy them all. Sesostris, perceiving the danger he was in, and expecting no assistance from his guards, who were all overcome with wine, * lifted up his hands, and imploring the gods in behalf of his wife and children, he rushed with them through the flames; and being thus unexpectedly preserved, he made oblations to several of the gods, but more especially to Vulcan, by whose protection he thought himself delivered. The traitor Armais being thus defeated in his wicked design, betook himself to arms; but was soon discomfited by Sesostris, and forced to flee into Greece, where he settled at Argos, and not long after, was chosen king: While his victorious brother, after nine years absence, returning in triumph into Egypt, adorned the temples with rich spoils: And having disbanded his army, after he had rewarded them according to their merit, he began to apply his mind to such stupen-

* Herodotus adds one circumstance more: That waking out of sleep, and finding his danger, he consulted with his queen what to do in this extremity, who advised him to throw two of his children into the flames, that they might serve as a bridge for all the rest; which he accordingly did, and so they all escaped. But this is generally deemed a mistake in our historian, or a circumstance crept in, on purpose to make the distress appear more affecting; *Bedford's Scripture Chronology, lib.*

A. M. 2515, &c. dous works as might immortalize his name, and everlasting-
 Ant. Christ. 1489, &c. ingly contribute to the public good.

He built a temple in every city in Egypt, and dedicated it to the peculiar god of the place. This was a work wherein he employed none but captives; and therefore he had it inscribed upon each temple, *None of the natives were put to labour here.* He raised vast mounts and hills, of earth, to which he removed the cities that had before too low a situation, in order to secure both man and beast from the danger of the Nile's inundations. All the way, from Memphis to the sea, he dug canals, which from the Nile branched out, and not only made an easier conveyance from place to place, but greatly advanced the trade and prosperity of the kingdom. All the towns that were upon the frontiers, and lay before exposed to any superiour number of forces, he fortified against the incursions of enemies, and made them of difficult access. He defended the east-side of Egypt against the irruptions of the Syrians and Arabians, with a wall drawn from Pelusium, through the deserts, as far as Heliopolis, which is at least fifteen hundred furlongs. He caused a ship of two hundred and eighty cubits long to be built all of cedar, gilded over with gold without, and lined with silver within; and to perpetuate the memory of his actions, he erected two obelisks of polished marble, an hundred and twenty cubits high, on which was inscribed an account of the extent of his empire, the value of his revenue, and the number of the nations which he had conquered. One thing however is reported of him, which argues an horrid insolence in so great a man, and tarnishes his character not a little, and that is, that at set times his custom was, to have the tributary kings, and such as held their dominions under his favour, to come into Egypt to pay their homage; and though he received them at first with all the signs of honour and respect, yet on certain occasions, he would have his horses unharnessed, and some four or more of these kings yoked together, and made to draw his chariot: But, bating this opprobrious piece of arrogance, (* and whereof he was cured before he died),

the
 * The manner in which he was cured is said to be this: — One day, as some of these tributary kings were drawing him along, he perceived one of them to look back upon one of the wheels, with a very great steadfastness; and thereupon inquiring what might be the subject of his thoughts, or the occasion of his deep attention, he received an answer to this effect: —

“ The

Chap. III. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 69

he was certainly, in all respects, the greatest prince that ever sat upon the Egyptian throne; and (what some have accounted an augmentation of his greatness) after he had reigned three and thirty years, he lost his eye-sight, and out of disgust, laid violent hands upon himself, thereby making his magnanimity in death (as they call it) equal to the glorious actions of his life.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

After that the children of Israel had left the Egyptians in the Red sea, the first people that gave them any molestation were the Amalekites. Amalek was the son of Eliphaz, by his concubine Timna, as Eliphaz was the first-born of Esau. He gave name both to the people and country where he lived, and notwithstanding the spuriousness of his birth, is, (t) in the catalogue of the Dukes of Edom, reckoned as one of them. The country of the Amalekites lay somewhere between Egypt and Palestine, and was therefore very probably bounded by Canaan to the north; by Egypt, or its dependent territories, to the south; by Edom, or the land of Seir, to the east; and by the deserts towards the sea, or perhaps by the margin of the sea itself, to the west.

The history
of the A-
malekites.

Their religion was at first no doubt the same that was taught in the house of Abraham; but in process of time, they were carried away with the general corruption, and fell into the same idolatry that their brethren the Edomites practised. And, as to their commerce or trade, the situation of their country might favour them, as much as their neighbours, and the superiority of the power and greatness, to which they had advanced themselves, looks as if they had improved it more than others.

Their form of government was monarchical; and as it appears that the first, (at least one of the first), and the last of their kings was called *Agag*, it is no unlikely supposition, that all their intermediate kings bore the same name. However this be, it is certain, that, at this time, they

“ The going round of the wheel, O King, calls to my mind the vicissitudes of fortune: For as every part of the wheel is up-
“ permost and lowermost by turns, so it is with men, who one
“ day sit on a throne, and on the next day are reduced to the
“ vilest degree of slavery.” Which answer struck the king with such compunction, that for ever after he gave off this inhuman practice; *Diodorus, lib. 1.*; and *Universal history, lib. 1. c. 3.*

(t) Gen. xxvi. 12.

were

A. M. 2515, &c. Ant. Christ. 1489, &c. from Numb. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy. were a flourishing nation, and grown up to such a † sudden height of power and grandeur, that their king is spoken of as much superiour to any other; and therefore, when Balaam foretels the future majesty of the Jewish state, he expresses himself, *that (t) their king should be higher than Agag*, and stiles them *the first of the nations*; which seems to countenance the wonderful things which the Arabian historians tell us of these people, viz. that they once conquered Egypt, and possessed the throne of that kingdom for several generations. The truth is, these Amalekites were a bold and daring people from the very first. No sooner had the Israelites set foot upon the Arabian shore; but they conspired against them, and falling on their rear, in their march to Horeb, made some slaughter among them, which Joshua, as soon as he had got his fighting men in order, took care to repay; though it must be confessed, that God, for some time, was pleased to make use of this nation (in conjunction with some of the Canaanites) to *(u) be scourges in the sides, and thorns in the eyes*, i. e. his instruments for the punishment of the diffidence, and disobedience of his own people.

Of the Edomites.

Esau, who, either from the colour of his hair and complexion, or for selling his birth-right to Jacob for a mess of red pottage, had the name of Edom given him: was the progenitor likewise of this people. Their ancient kingdom, when in its meridian, was bounded on the north by the land of Canaan and Salt-sea; on the south by the Arabian gulf; on the east, by the land of Midian; and on the west, by the kingdom of Amalek:

† The kingdom of Edom commenced much about the time of the Israelites departure out of Egypt; and that of Amalek could not be much, if any thing at all, older; and therefore when Balaam expressed himself in so high a strain, concerning Agag, and his monarchy, it could not have been much above forty years standing. The expression of Amalek's being *the first of the nations*, our version turns otherwise in the margin, *the first of the nations that warred against Israel*; and if we compare what is said of Agag, but thirteen verses before, we shall not be at a loss for the right, at least for a natural explication of the words, viz. that they were the greatest, and most noble nation at that time; and accordingly Le Clerc's version stiles them *the first fruits of the nations*, by which, in his Commentary, he understands them to have been the most ancient and potent nation of any of those which proceeded from the loins of Abraham and Lot; *Universal History*, lib. 1. c. 4.

(t) Numb. xxiv. 7. (u) Josh. xxiii. 13.

And

Chap. III. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 71

And in this compass of ground, they had several remarkable cities (besides two eminent sea ports, Elath and Esiongeber) on the Arabian gulph; but the latter of these became so infamous for the many wrecks which beset the shipping that frequented it, that, in time, it came to be disused.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Chris.
1489, &c.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

The people were naturally bold and courageous; jealous of their rights, and always in a disposition to maintain them; as those who claim the empire of the sea, (in the manner that they did) should always be. As they were descended from Abraham, we are not to doubt, but that their belief and practice were right at first, though, by degrees, (x) they fell into idolatry; and if we can suppose that the book of Job was of as ancient date as is pretended, and that he himself lived among these people, we cannot but acknowledge, that the (y) invention and use of constellations in astronomy, (z) the art of writing, (a) the art of navigation, and many more parts of truly useful knowledge, were begun, and cultivated among them.

The form of their civil constitution seems to have varied according to the exigencies of the times. The Horites, who very early inhabited this country, were ruled at first by their respective patriarchs, or heads of families; (b) till being overcome by Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, who swept them before him, with other nations, they, to secure themselves for the time to come, changed the constitution into an elective monarchy; and it was under this form of government, that Esau, and his family lived for some time sojourners in this land. The monarchy however did not last above seven or eight successions, till, some way or other, it came to be divided into several little independent principalities or dukedoms; and as the posterity of Esau exceeded all others in the number of their dukes, it cannot be incongruous to suppose, that they had the greatest hand in bringing about this revolution, and the largest share in the government that was founded thereupon.

And as they had the largest share in the government, it is not unreasonable to suppose farther, that in consequence of their power, they soon expelled the Horite dukes, and at the same time might force Amalek, or his spurious off-

(x) 2 Kings viii. 20. (y) Job ix. 8. (z) Ibid. xix, 24.
(a) Ibid ix. (b) Bishop Cumberland's Orig. gent. antiq.

A. M. 2515, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1489, etc.
from Numb
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

spring, to leave their dominions. For in the next generation, the posterity of Esau are stiled absolute dukes of Edom, were only eleven in number, and in all the country had no rivals. But as the approach of the children of Israel put them, and every nation else, in a great consternation, they thought it most conducive to their general safety, to unite under one common head; and thereupon having made choice of a king, they resolved to maintain their ground against any invasion. It was to this nameless king, or perhaps his successor, that Moses sent ambassadors, desiring a free passage through his country, which he absolutely denied, and to let him see that he was in earnest, immediately took the field; but as his design was to act upon the defensive only, and not distress a people that were his brethren, in matters wherein he could relieve them, without danger to himself, (c) he supplied them (for their money) with whatever necessaries they wanted. And thus far the history of the Edomites, during this period, goes.

Of the
Moabites.

Moab, the son of Lot, by an incestuous commerce with the elder of his daughters, was the progenitor of this people, and gave name to their country; which was bounded on the east, by the deserts of Arabia; on the west, by the mountains that lie east from the Dead-sea; on the north, by the country of the Ammonites, the descendants of Lot by his younger daughter; and on the south, by the brook or little river Zerid, which runs into the Dead-sea; so that, in the whole, it is about forty miles in length, and as much in breadth.

That the people had once the knowledge of the true God, can hardly be doubted; but in time they loved not to retain that knowledge, but introduced the worship of false gods, with such monstrous and obscene ceremonies, as are not fit to be named. Their principal idols were Chemosh and Baal-peor; and to these they sacrificed, on mountains dedicated to that service, and in temples built in their cities, not only oxen and rams, but upon extraordinary occasions, human victims.

The form of their government was regal, and the first inhabitants of their country were the Emims, a great and powerful people, of extraordinary strength and stature, very probably the descendants of Ham, and of the same gigantic race with the Anakims and Rephaims, though the

(c) Deut. ii. 28, 29.

Moabites

Ch. III. from the Israelites departure from Egypt, &c. 73

Moabites called them by the name *Emims*, which, in Hebrew, signifies *terrible*. And too terrible an enemy had they been for the Moabites, had not Chedorlaomer and his allies, by their frequent incursions, much weakened them, and made them an easy prey. The Moabites, however, when they had thus dispossessed them, kept not their new dominions long entire; for Sihon, king of the Amorites, who bordered on them eastward, fought against the king of Moab, and took from him all his kingdom to the north of the river Arnon.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1489, &c.
from Numb.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

The successor to this king was Balak, who was then upon the throne, when the Israelites came and encamped in the neighbourhood of his country. His tampering with the infamous Balaam was the reason why his people were not permitted to mix or intermarry with the Hebrews; but as the Midianites, (whose history we are now come to), were more particularly instrumental in seducing them to idolatry, their punishment, for the present, was more severe.

Midian, the fourth son of Abraham by his wife Keturah, is generally reputed to have given name to the country, and to have been the progenitor of the Midianites, who, in the early ages of the world, were confounded with (*d*) the Ishmaelites, and soon after seem to be conjoined with the (*e*) Moabites, as if they had been both one nation; when the true reason of this seeming commixture was, that according as they lived to the norther or southern parts of the country, of course they joined themselves either to the Moabites or Ishmaelites; and upon that account, are oftentimes promiscuously mentioned in Scripture.

Of the
Midianites.

What the limits of their country were, it is not so easy a matter to perceive. Its boundary on the east is uncertain, but on the west it was contiguous to the land of Edom; on the north, to the country of Moab; and on the south to the Red sea.

Its inhabitants were very numerous, and may be distinguished into two sorts, shepherds and merchants. The shepherds moved up and down in tents; they drove their cattle before them, even when they went to war; and seem to have had few or no fixed habitations, except some strong holds near the borders of their country. The merchants, in like manner, travelled from place to place,

(*d*) Gen. xxxvii. 25, 28. (*e*) Ibid. xxxvi. 35.

A. M. in companies, or caravans, (as it is the custom in those
 2515, etc. parts even to this day), and the only settlements they seem
 Ant. Christ. to have had were their marts, and stations, in places con-
 1489, etc. venient for their trade.
 from Numb.

xviii. to the By these two different employs, however, the whole na-
 end of Deu- tion flourished to a great degree. The merchants grew ex-
 teronomy. cessively rich; and the shepherds, by exchanging with them
 their cattle for gold, and jewels of all kinds, were enabled
 to make a much better appearance than other nations. But
 as their affluence in these things soon introduced luxury,
 they were a people remarkable for all kinds of vanity, riot,
 and excess. Though their learning could not be great, yet
 their merchants were obliged to know something of writ-
 ing and arithmetic, in order to keep their accounts; and
 as they were traders, and situate on the Red sea, it can
 hardly be supposed, but that they applied themselves to
 ship-building, in order to explore not only their own coasts,
 but those of other countries likewise, that lay contiguous to
 them; and consequently, could not be without some toler-
 able skill in geography and geometry.

Their religion differed, according to the part of the
 country which they inhabited. Those who lived in the
 north of Midian, fell into all the abominations of the
 Moabites, and in their endeavour to corrupt the Israelites,
 quite exceeded them: But those that were placed more to-
 wards the south, (if we may take Jethro, who is said to
 have ruled over a people near the Red sea, for a pattern),
 retained just notions of God, and of the form of worship
 which he had prescribed to their forefathers; for they offer-
 ed up praises, and thanksgivings, and sacrifices to him,
 though their religious rites and ceremonies are not specified.

Their form of government might, in the like manner,
 be different, according to the part of the country which
 they inhabited, though, in the main, it looks as if it had been
 aristocratical, rather than monarchical. Jethro indeed,
 in our translation, is called a *priest*; and because the
 word, in the original, does equally signify a *prince*, it has
 generally been concluded, that he had the honour of being
 both. Mention is likewise made of other princes; and
 the five who fell by the hand of Israel, are sometimes
 styled kings, and sometimes dukes of Midian: So that
 this nation seems to have been governed by a multitude
 of dukes, or petty princes, who, perhaps, in their own
 jurisdiction,

jurisdiction, were independent on each other, and yet, some way or other, were, in Moses's time, (f) feudatory under Sihon king of the Amorites. Sihon, indeed, had made a conquest from the Moabites of the best part of the country he then possessed, and having settled himself in their place, made several of the neighbouring princes tributary to him; but refusing a passage to the Hebrews, and coming without † any provocation to attack them, he himself was slain, and his whole army routed; Heshbon, his capital city, was taken; and all the rest of his dominions distributed among the Israelites.

A. M.
2515, &c.
Ant. Chris.
1489, &c.
from Num.
xviii. to the
end of Deu-
teronomy.

These were the several nations on the other, *i. e.* on the east-side of Jordan, which God delivered into the hands of his people; and more we shall have to say of them, as they meet us in our way. In the mean time, the progress which the Israelites have hitherto made, the enemies they have vanquished, and the kingdoms they have seized and divided among themselves, notwithstanding all the artifices to prevent them, do sufficiently verify that conclusion, at the end of their leader's last exhortation; (g) *Hap-*

(f) Josh. xiii. 21.

† It is reckoned good policy in a general, when he has any great design in agitation, which cannot so well be executed without passing through a neutral country, not to ask leave at first, because too much civility would lay him under the suspicion of fear; but first of all to enter the prince's country, and then to send and desire permission for his troops to march through it. But this was not Moses's practice. He first sent ambassadors to the king of the Amorites, with this peaceable message; "Let me pass through thy land, we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards; we will not drink the waters of the well; but we will go along by the king's highway, till we be past the borders: *Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink; only I will pass through on my feet;*" Numb. xxi. 22. After so civil a message as this, if Sihon thought not proper to let the children of Israel pass through his country, he might have contented himself with so doing, because it does not appear, that the Israelites ever threatened to force their passage: But when, instead of acting upon the defensive, (which was all that in reason he should have done), he sets himself at the head of his forces, and marches out to fight; the war must be deemed unjust on his side, and the fate he met with no more than his desert; *Calmet's Dictionary.*

(g) Deut. xxxiii. 28, 29.

A. M. 2515, &c. Ant. Christ. 1489, &c. from Numb. xviii. to the end of Deuteronomy. *py art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help; and who is the sword of thy excellency? Thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places. The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine, and his heavens shall drop down dew.*

The END of the FOURTH BOOK.



T H E

T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F T H E
B I B L E.

B O O K V.

Containing an Account of Things, from the Israelites Entrance into the Land of Canaan, to the Building of Solomon's Temple. In all, 447 Years.

C H A P. I.

From their Entrance, to the Death of Joshua.

The H I S T O R Y.

UPON the death of Moses, Joshua, who had a long while been his prime minister, by the command of God, undertook the conduct of the children of Israel; and as it was a very momentous charge, he was not a little anxious how he should be enabled to execute it. He saw himself indeed at the head of six hundred thousand fighting men; but then the nations which he was to subdue, were a warlike and gigantic people, that had already taken the alarm, and therefore made early preparations for a defence; had fortified their cities, and confederated their forces against him. And while he was musing on these things, to give him encouragement in his undertaking, † God

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Christ,
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.
Joshua succeeds Moses
in the government
of the Israelites.

was
† It is the opinion of most interpreters, that whenever God is said to speak to Moses, to Joshua, or any other pious man in the Old Testament, he does not do it by himself, but by an angel only. This perhaps might be his most common way of communicating himself; but there want not several instances in Scripture,

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

was pleased to assure him, that he would not fail to protect and assist him in it, in the same manner as he had done his predecessor Moses, and provided he took care to obey his laws, as Moses had done, make the whole land of Canaan a cheap and easy conquest to him : And therefore without perplexing his mind any farther, he ordered him immediately to set about the work.

He sends
spies into
the land of
Canaan.

* The city of Jericho was just opposite to the place

God himself, or (as others will have it) the eternal *Logos*, converses with his servants. And this he may do, either by a mental locution, wherein he objects to their minds the express idea of what such a number of words would convey; or by a corporal locution, when he assumes an apparent body, and speech, in the same manner that men speak. But in the place before us, (whether it were an angel, or God himself), he seems to have spoken to Joshua out of the sanctuary, from whence he had spoken to him a little before Moses's death, and gave him encouragement to perform strenuously what he is now putting upon him; *Deut. xxxi. 14, 23.*

* Jericho was a city of Canaan, which afterwards fell to the lot of the tribe of Benjamin, about seven leagues distant from Jerusalem, and two from Jordan. Moses calls it likewise the *city of palm-trees*, *Deut. xxxiv. 3.* because there were great numbers of them in the plains of Jericho; and not only of palm-trees, but, as Josephus tells us, (*Antiq. lib. 4. c. 5.*), balsam-trees likewise, which produced the precious liquor in such high esteem among the ancients. The plain of Jericho was watered with a rivulet, which was formerly salt and bitter, but was afterwards sweetened by the prophet Elisha, *2 Kings ii. 21, 22.*; whereupon the adjacent country, which was watered by it, became not only one of the most agreeable, but most fertile spots in all that country. As to the city itself, after it was destroyed by Joshua, it was, in the days of Ahab king of Israel, rebuilt by Hiel the Bethelite, *1 Kings xvi. 34.* and in the times of the last kings of Judea, yielded to none, except Jerusalem. For it was adorned with a royal palace, wherein Herod the Great died; with an *hippodromus*, or place where the Jewish nobility learned to ride the great horse, and other arts of chivalry; with an amphitheatre, and other magnificent buildings; but during the siege of Jerusalem, the treachery of its inhabitants provoked the Romans to destroy it. After the siege was over, there was another city built, but not upon the same place where the two former stood; for the ruins of them are seen to this day. Of what account and bigness it was, we have no certain information; but some later travellers inform us, that at present it is no more than a poor, nasty village of the Arabs; *Well's Geography of the Old and New Testament*; and *Maunderell's Journey from Aleppo*.

where

where he was to * pass the river Jordan; and as it was the first that he intended to attack, he thought it advisable to send two spies thither, to take a view of the situation and strength, and avenues of the place. As soon as the

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

* Jordan is supposed to derive its name from the Hebrew word *Jor*, which signifies a *spring*, and *Dan*, which is a small town, and not far from the fountain-head of this river. It is certainly a river of very great note in holy writ, and of it the Jewish historian gives us the following account: "The head of this river has been thought to be Panion; but, in truth, it passes hither under ground, and the source of it is Phiala, an hundred and twenty furlongs from Cæsarea Philippi, a little on the right hand, and not much out of the way to Trachonis.—From the cave of Panion, it crosses the bogs and fens of the Lake Semechonitis, and after a course of an hundred and twenty furlongs further, passes under the city of Julias (or Bethsaida), and so over the Lake Gennesareth, or Tiberias, and then, running a long way through a wilderness or desert, it empties itself into the Lake Asphaltites, or the Dead-sea." Now since the cave Panion lies at the foot of mount Lebanon, and the Lake Asphaltites reaches to the very extremity of the south of Judea, the river Jordan must extend its course quite from the northern to the southern boundary of the Holy Land. But the largeness of this river is far from being equal to its extent. It may be said indeed to have two banks, whereof the first and outermost is that to which the river does, or at least anciently did, overflow at some seasons of the year; but at present, (whether the rapidity of the current has worn its channel deeper, or its waters are directed some other way), so it is that it seems to have forgot its ancient greatness: For "we (says Mr. Maundrell) could discern no sign or probability of such overflowing, tho' we were there on the 30th of March, which is the proper time for its inundations. Nay, so far was the river from overflowing, that it ran at least two yards below the brink of its channel. After you have descended the outermost bank, (continues he), you go about a furlong upon the level strand before you come to the immediate bank of the river, which is so beset with bushes and trees, such as tamarisks, willows, oleanders, &c. that you can see no water, until you have made your way through them. In this cover of the banks, lions, and other wild creatures are said to hide themselves in summer, but, upon the inundation of the river, they are forced to dislodge." To which the prophet seems to allude in these words, *He shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan*, Jer. xlix. 19. The river, in short, seems much diminished from its ancient grandeur; for it is not above twenty yards in breadth, though deep and muddy, and a little too rapid to swim over; *Wells and Maundrell, ibid.*

A. M. 2555, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

spies were gone, he bade the officers go through the camp, and give the people notice, that within three days they were to pass the Jordan, in order to take possession of the promised land, and were therefore † to provide themselves with victuals for their march. * The spies who were

† The Israelites usual food, while they sojourned in the wilderness, was manna; but as they approached the promised land, where they might have provision in an ordinary way, that miraculous bread did perhaps gradually decrease; and in the space of a few days after this, was totally withdrawn. They were now in the countries of Sion and Og, which they had lately conquered, and the victuals which they were commanded to provide themselves with, were such as their new conquest afforded: For being, after three days, (Josh. iii. 1.), to remove very early in the morning, they might not perhaps have had time to gather a sufficient quantity of manna, and to bake it before they were obliged to march; *Patrick's Commentary*.

* The eastern writers tell us, that these spies (whom they make to be Caleb and Phineas) were valiant and religious men, and in the prime of their youth; that to pass unobserved, they changed their habits, as if they had come from a distant country; and if any one asked them any questions, their reply was to this effect: "We are people from the east, and our companions have heard of this powerful people, who were forty years in the wilderness, without either guide or provision; and it was reported to us, that they had a God whom they called *the king of heaven and earth*, and who (as they say) hath given them both your and our country. Our principals have therefore sent us to find out the truth hereof, and to report it to them. We have likewise heard of their captain, whom they call Joshua, the son of Nun, who put the Amalekites to flight, who destroyed Sihon and Og, the kings of Midian and Moab. Wo therefore be to us, and you, and all that flee to us for shelter! They are a people who pity none, leave none alive, drive all out of their country, and make peace with none. We are all accounted by them infidels, profane, proud, and rebellious. Whoever of us or you, therefore, that intend to take care of themselves, let them take their families, and be gone, lest they repent of their stay when it is too late." By this means they imposed upon the people; and (as Josephus informs us) went whither they would, and saw whatever they had a mind to, without any stop or question. They took a view of the walls, the gates, the ramparts, and passed the whole day for men of curiosity only, without any design. So that if any credit may be given to this account, it was but just that they who thus imposed upon the Canaanites should, in the same manner, be imposed upon by the Gibeonites; *Chronicon Samaritanum Arabice scriptum*, p. 65.; and *Josephus's Antiq.* l. 5. c. 1.

sent

sent upon this hazardous expedition, got safe into the city, and took up their lodgings in a public-house that was kept by a widow-woman, whose name was Rahab. But they had not been long there, before intelligence was brought to the king, so that he ordered the gates to be shut, and search to be made for the men: But their hostess having had some notice of it, hid them under some hempen stocks, which lay drying * upon the roof of her house, and when the king's officers came, she told them, "That there had indeed been two strangers there, who had made a short stay at her house, but that, a little before sun-set, they went away, but might easily be overtaken, because they had not been long gone:" Whereupon they sent out messengers after them, as far as the fords of Jordan; but in vain. Having thus eluded the king's officers, Rahab goes up to the spies, and tells them, "That she was very confident their God, (who was the only true God, both in heaven and earth), had delivered that country into their hands: that the actions which he had done for them, in making all opposition fall before them, had struck a panic fear into all its inhabitants; and that therefore, as she was confident that this would be the event, and had, in this instance, shewn them uncommon kindness, her only request was, that when they came against the city, they would, in return, spare her, and her family's lives; for which she desired of them some assurance." An offer so generous and so unexpected, joined with so liberal a confession, could not but engage the two spies to a compliance with what she requested; and therefore they promised, and solemnly swore to her, that whenever they became masters of the city, not only she, and her family, but every one else, that was in her house, should be exempted from the common ruin.

The gates were so closely shut and guarded, that there was no possibility for making their escape that way; but Rahab's house being happily situated upon the city-wall, as soon as it was conveniently dark, she first charged them

* The roofs of houses were then very flat, and having probably battlements round them to secure people from falling off, (as the manner of building was afterwards among the Jews, Deut. xxii. 8.), were made use of for places to walk, or at any time to lay any kind of goods upon.

A. M. 2553, &c. Ant. Christ. 1451, &c. from Josh. i. to the end. Who being kindly entertained by Rahab, returned to the camp in safety.

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

to make to the neighbouring mountains, where they might keep themselves concealed, until the messengers were returned, and then let them down by a silken cord from one of her windows, which faced the country. But before they parted, they agreed, that this same cord hung out at her window, should be the token between them; and therefore they desired, that whoever she minded to save, might, when their army approached the city, be kept within doors. The spies, having thus luckily escaped, took Rahab's advice, and concealed themselves in the mountains, until those who were sent out to pursue them were returned to the city, and then they made the best of their way to the camp; where they informed Joshua of their whole adventure, and withal gave him to understand, that the general consternation which they found the people in, was to them a sure omen that God Almighty intended to crown their arms with success.

The Israel-
ites pass the
river Jor-
dan.

Pleased with this news, Joshua gave orders for the army to decamp; but, before he did that, he reminded the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, of the promise they had made Moses, to assist their brethren in the conquest of Canaan; † which they readily consented to do, and not only in that, but in every thing else he commanded them to do, promised to obey him with the same cheerfulness that they had done Moses: So that forty thousand of them decamped with him, and fell down to the banks of Jordan.

It was now in the time of the barley-harvest, (which in these hot countries falls early in the spring), when, by reason of hasty rain, and the melting of the snow upon Mount Lebanon, the river is generally full of water, and

† The two tribes and an half had the countries which had lately been conquered, and were now given to them in possession, to preserve against the attempts of the nations from whom they had taken them; and can hardly be supposed to go, one and all, along with their brethren to the conquest of the countries which lay on the other side of the river Jordan. In the last muster of the army, they consisted of above an hundred thousand able soldiers; and we can hardly suppose, that at this time their number was decreased. The forty thousand that went over Jordan, were but a part of them, and the rest were left behind to guard their new conquests against the vanquished nations, that had abundant reason to become their enemies; *Saurin, vol. 3. Dissertation I.*

Sometimes

sometimes overflows its banks : And as soon as the army was come within a small distance of the place where it was intended they should cross, Joshua sent and communicated to every tribe the order that was to be observed in this solemn march. The priests, bearing the ark, were to begin the procession ; each tribe in the order in which they used to march, were to follow. When the priests were got into the middle of the channel, there they were to stand still, until the whole multitude was got safe to the other shore ; and that this wonderful passage might be more regarded, they were all enjoined to sanctify themselves, by washing their cloaths, avoiding all impurities, and abstaining from matrimonial intercourse the night before.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ,
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

Before they crossed the river, Joshua, by God's direction, appointed twelve men, out of every tribe one, to chuse twelve stones (according to the number of their tribes) in the midst of the channel, where the priests, with the ark, were ordered to stand, and † there to set them up, (that they might be seen from each side of the river, when the waters were abated), as a monument of this great miracle ; and to bring twelve more ashore with them for the like purpose.

With these orders and instructions, the army set forward. The priests, with the ark, led the van ; and as soon as they touched the river with their feet, the stream divided. The waters above went back, and rose up on heaps, as far as the city † Adam ; whilst those that were below, continuing their course towards the Dead-sea, opened a passage of above 16 or 18 miles for the Israelites to cross over, and all the time that they were thus crossing, the priests with the ark stood in the middle of the channel, till every thing was done that Joshua commanded ;

† It has been a custom in all nations to erect monuments of stone, in order to preserve the memory of covenants, victories, and other great transactions ; and though there was no inscription upon these stones, yet the number of them, and the place where they lay, (which was not at all stony), was sufficient to signify some memorable thing, which posterity would not fail to hand down from one generation to another ; *Patrick's Commentary*, on Joshua iv. 7.

† Adam, or Adom, is a place situate on the banks of the river Jordan, towards the south of the sea of Cinnereth, or the sea of Galilee ; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*.

A. M. and then, upon their coming out of it, the river returned
 2553, &c. to its wonted course.
 Ant. Christ.

2451, &c. By this miraculous passage, Joshua having gained the
 from Josh. i. plains of Jericho, incamped in a † place which was af-
 to the end. terwards called *Gilgal*; and while the whole country lay
 under a great terrour and consternation, God commanded †
 the rite of circumcision, which for the space of almost forty
 years

† *Gilgal*, the place where the Israelites incamped for some time after their passage over the river Jordan, was so called, because here the rite of circumcision, which had long been disused, was renewed: Whereupon *the Lord said unto Joshua, this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt (i. e. uncircumcision) from off you; wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal (i. e. rolling) unto this day*, Josh. v. 9. From this expression the place received its name, and if we look unto its situation, we shall find, that as the Israelites passed over *Jordan right against Jericho*, Josh. iii. 16. and incamped in *Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho*, it is plain, that *Gilgal* must be situated between Jordan and Jericho; and therefore, since Josephus tells us, that Jericho was sixty furlongs distant from Jordan, and the camp of *Gilgal* was fifty furlongs from the same river; it hence follows, that *Gilgal* was ten furlongs (*i. e.* about a mile and a quarter) from Jericho eastward. But as some learned men have observed, that five of the furlongs used by Josephus make up an Italian mile, so the distance between *Gilgal* and Jericho, will be just two miles; which exactly agrees with the testimony of St. Jerom, who makes it two miles distant from Jericho, and a place held in great veneration by the inhabitants of the country in his days; *Wells's Geography*, vol. ii. c. 4.

† The command which God gives Joshua, concerning the rite of circumcision, is this, — *Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise the children of Israel, the second time*, Josh. v. 2. And after the rite was performed, God said, *This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you*, ver. 9. Both of which passages have given no small trouble to commentators. The *sharp knives* are allowed to be (what our marginal notes call them) *knives of flint*; which stones could not but be plentiful in the mountains of Arabia, and when made very sharp, where the knives commonly made use of in the eastern countries: But St. Jerom himself (as great an Hebraist as he was) could not find out what was this circumcision, which was to pass upon the Israelites the second time. Some of the Jews, from these words of Jeremiah, *I will punish the circumcised, that has a foreskin*, chap. ix. 25. have undertaken to prove, that it was possible to bring the foreskin again by art, which the Israelites had done, during their abode in the wilderness, and for this reason, were ordered to be circumcised afresh; and those Christians who

years had been intermitted, to be renewed, that the people might be qualified to partake of the ensuing passover. ^{A. M. 2553, &c.} This was the third time of their celebrating that festival: ^{Ant. Chriſt. 1451, &c.} The first was at their departure out of Egypt; the second ^{from Joſh. i. to the end.} at their erection of the tabernacle, at the foot of Mount Sinai; and now that they were arrived in a country where-
in there was a sufficient provision of corn for unleavened

who have embraced this notion, pretend to support it by the words of St. Paul, *If any man is called, being circumcised μή ἀποκατέσθω, let him not get a foreskin again, or, as we render it, let him not become uncircumcised.* But whether the recovery of a prepuce be a thing probable or not, it is certain, that all the difficulty of the words arises from misunderstanding the idiom of the original, and may easily be removed, if they were translated, or paraphrased thus, — *Let the ceremony of circumcision, which has been so long discontinued, be renewed, as it was once heretofore.* While the Israelites lived in Egypt, we do not read of any neglect of this rite of circumcision among them; but while they abode in the wilderness, there are several reasons that might oblige them to omit it, until they arrived in the promised land, when they were to renew the ordinance of the passover, and, previous to that, were all to be circumcised; because no uncircumcised person, nor any one who had a son, or a man servant in his house uncircumcised, was capable of being admitted to it, *Exod. xii. 43. 2d, The rolling away the reproach of Egypt, is supposed by some to relate to the reproaches which the Egyptians used to cast upon the Israelites, viz. that the Egyptians seeing the Israelites wander so long in the wilderness, reproached and flouted them, as if they were brought to be destroyed there, and not conducted into the promised land, from which reproaches God now delivered them, when, by enjoining circumcision, he gave them assurance, that they should shortly enjoy the country, which no uncircumcised person might inherit.* Our learned Spencer thinks the reproach of Egypt to be the slavery to which they had long been there subject, but were now fully declared a free people, by receiving a mark of the seed of Abraham, and being made heirs of the promised land. But the most common opinion, is, that by the *reproach of Egypt*, is meant nothing else but uncircumcision, with which the Israelites always upbraided other people, and particularly the Egyptians, with whom they had lived so long, and were best acquainted; and admitting this to be the true (as it is the most unconstrained) sense, this passage is a plain proof, that the Israelites could not learn the rite of circumcision from the Egyptians, (as some pretend), but that the Egyptians, contrarywise, must have had it from them; *Universal History, lib. 1. c. 7.; Spencer De leg. Heb. 1. 1. c. 4.; Patrick's Commentary; and Shuckford's Connection, vol. 3. lib. 12.*

bread,

A. M. bread, God insisted upon the observance of his ordinances:
 2553, etc. He was minded indeed, that all things now should go on
 Ant. Chris. in their regular way; and therefore, for the future, he left
 1457, etc. them to the provision which this land of plenty afforded
 from Josh. i. to the end, them; and ceased to supply them any longer with manna.

Take, and sack Jericho. Gilgal was much about two miles from Jericho, and therefore Joshua might possibly go out alone to reconnoitre the city, and to think of the properest way of besieging it; when, all on a sudden, there † appeared to him a person cloathed in armour, and standing at some distance, with a drawn sword in his hand. Undaunted at this unusual sight, Joshua advances to him, and having demanded of what party he was, the vision replied, that he was for the host of Israel, whose captain and guardian he was; and as Joshua, in humble adoration, was fallen prostrate before him, he ordered him, (in the manner he had done Moses at the burning bush), to loose his sandals from off his feet, and then proceeded to instruct him in what form he would have the siege carried on, that the Canaanites might

† Who this person was that appeared to Joshua, is not so well agreed among commentators. Some are of opinion, that it was an angel, who because the Hebrews calls him *Gebir* is supposed to be *Gabriel*; but there are several reasons in this very account of his apparition, which denote him to be a divine, and not a created being. For, in the first place, besides his assuming the title of *the Captain of the host of the Lord*, (an image under which God himself is frequently represented in Scripture), Joshua's calling him *Jehovah*, or the *Lord*, a name which neither Joshua should have given, nor he accepted of, had he been no more than an angel; his falling down and worshipping him, which he durst not have done, (since God alone is to be adored), nor would the other have permitted; but rather have reproved him, as we find one of them did St. John, Rev. xii. 10. are the surest evidence of the divinity of his person. For when, instead of reproving him for doing him too much honour, we find him commanding him to do more, by requiring him to loose *his shoes from off his feet*, insisting upon the highest acknowledgement of a divine presence that was used among the eastern nations, we cannot but think ourselves obliged (with a learned rabbin) freely to confess, "That this angel who suffered himself to be worshipped, and by whose presence the place where he appeared was sanctified, so that Joshua was commanded to *put off his shoes*, no doubt was the very same whom all the angels of heaven do worship;" *Job, a Coch*, upon the Gemara of the Sanhedrin, vol. iii. *Dissertation 2*.

perceive

Perceive that it was something more than the arm of flesh that fought against them.

A. M.
2553. etc.
Ant. Chri.
1457, etc.
from Jos. i.
to the end.

The form of the siege was this : — All the army was to march round the city, with seven priests before the ark, having in their hands trumpets made of rams horns, six days successively. On the seventh, after the army had gone round the city seven times, upon signal given, the priests were to blow a long blast with their trumpets, and the people on a sudden set up a loud shout ; at which instant the walls of the city should fall so flat to the ground, that they might directly walk into it without any let or obstruction. These orders were put in execution ; and accordingly, on the seventh day, the walls fell, and the Israelites entered. They put every one, men, women, and children, nay the very beasts, to the sword, and spared no living creature, but Rahab only, and such relations as she had taken under the protection of her roof, according to the stipulation which had been made with her. For Joshua had given the two spies a strict charge beforehand, that when the town was going to be sacked, they should repair to her house, and convey every thing safe out that belonged to her ; which accordingly they did, and then the whole army fell on, and set fire to the city, and destroyed every thing in it, except the silver and gold, and such vessels of brass and iron, as were to be put into the treasury of the house of the Lord, as they had done once before (a) in a case of the like nature : And that it might never be rebuilt again, Joshua † denounced a prophetic imprecation

(a) Numb. xxi. 22, 23.

† The words of Joshua's execration are these : — *Cursed be the man before the Lord, that raiseth up and buildeth this city Jericho ; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it*, Josh. vi. 26. " This " anathema (says Maimonides) was pronounced, that the miracle " of the subversion of Jericho might be kept in perpetual memo- " ry ; for whosoever saw the walls sunk deep into the earth, (as he " understands it), would clearly discern, that this was not the " form of a building destroyed by men, but miraculously thrown " down by God." Hiel however, in the reign of Ahab, either not remembering, or not believing this denunciation, was so taken with the beauty of its situation, that he rebuilt Jericho, and (as the sacred history informs us), *laid the foundation thereof in Abiram, his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke by Joshua, the*

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

The death
of Achan
for purloin-
ing part of
the booty.

cation on the man (*viz.* that it should occasion the utter ruin of his family) that should attempt it.

† Ai was a little city, about twelve miles distant from Jericho; and as Joshua knew that it was neither populous nor well defended, he detached a small body, of three thousand men only, to go and attack it. But, contrary to their expectation, the inhabitants of the place sallied out upon them, and having slain some few, put the rest to flight, and pursued them as far as their own camp. This defeat (how small soever) struck such a damp upon the people's courage, that * Joshua was forced to have recourse

son of Nun, 1 Kings xvi. 34. However, after that Hiel had ventured to rebuild it, no scruple was made of inhabiting it; for it afterwards became famous upon many accounts. Here the prophet sweetened the waters of the spring that supplied it, and the neighbouring countries: Here Herod built a sumptuous place: It was the dwelling-place of Zaccheus; and was honoured with the presence of Christ, who vouchsafed likewise to work some miracles here; *Universal History*, lib. 1. c. 7.

† We have this place mentioned in the history of Abraham, who, both before and after his going into Egypt, pitched his tent between Bethel and Ai, or Hai, as it was then called; and from both Gen. xii. 8. and Josh. vii. 2. it appears, that this city lay to the east of Bethel, about three leagues from Jericho, and one from Bethel, as Masias informs us; and the reason why Joshua sent so small a detachment against it was, because the place in itself was neither strong nor large. For when it was taken, the number of the slain, both in it and Bethel, which (as some think) was confederate with it, were *but twelve thousand, both of men and women*, Josh. viii. 25. The providence of God however was very visible, in sending so small a party against Ai: For if the flight of three thousand men put the Israelites into such a consternation, as we read Josh. vii. 5, 6. what a condition would they have been in, if all the people had been discomfited, as doubtless would have happened, while the guilt of Achan's sacrilege remained unpunished; *Wells's Geography*, vol. ii. c. 4.

* The spirits of the army (as Josephus tells us) were so sunk upon this disorder, and cast down into such a desperation of better things to come, that after they had spent the whole day in fasting, weeping, and mourning, Joshua addressed himself, with a more than ordinary importunity to Almighty God, in words to this effect: "It is not any temerity, O Lord, or ambition of our own, that has brought us hither to make war upon this people, but a pure deference and respect to the persuasion of thy servant Moses, that has incited us to this undertaking, and not without a warrant of many signs and mi-

"racles,

recourse to God, who immediately answered him, (by Urim, as is supposed), that his commands had been sacrilegiously infringed; and therefore ordered him to have the offender punished with death, and directed him to a method how to discover who he was.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

Before the taking of Jericho, (b) Joshua had cautioned the people not to spare any thing that was in it, but to burn and destroy all that came in their way, except silver, and gold, and brass, and iron, which were to be consecrated to the Lord: But notwithstanding his strict charge against reserving any thing that was either devoted to this general destruction, or consecrated to the Lord, a man of the tribe of Judah, whose name was Achan, took some of the rich plunder, and concealed it in his tent. To find out the person therefore, Joshua, early next morning, called all the tribes together before the tabernacle, where; † by casting the lot, first upon the tribes, and so proceeding

“racles, to convince us, that he had reason and authority on
“his side, when he told us, that thou thyself hadst promised
“us the possession of this country, and to give us victory over
“all our enemies. But what a change is here, all on a sudden,
“in the disappointment of our hopes, and in the loss of our
“friends! As if either Moses’s prediction had not been of di-
“vine inspiration, or otherwise thy promises and purposes va-
“riable. If this be the beginning of a war, we cannot but
“dread the farther progress of it, for fear that this miscarriage,
“upon the first experiment, should prove only the earnest of
“greater evils to come. But, Lord, thou alone, that art able
“to give us relief, help us, and save us. Vouchsafe unto us com-
“fort and victory; and be graciously pleased to preserve us from
“the snare of despairing for the future;” *Jewish Antiq. lib. 5. c. 1.*

(b) Josh. vi. 18, 19.

† Some Jewish doctors are of opinion, that, in the discovery of the guilty persons, there was no use made of lots at all, but that all Israel being ordered to pass by the high-priest, who, on this occasion had his pectoral on, in which were the twelve stones, with the names of the twelve tribes engraven on them, when the tribe to which the guilty person belonged, was called, the stone in which was the name of that tribe, changed colour, and turned black; and so it did, when the family, the household, and the person was called. But this is a mere fiction. There is much more probability in the opinion of those, who suppose, that, at first, twelve lots or tickets were put into one urn, on each of which was written the name of one of these twelve tribes: That when one of the twelve tribes

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

proceeding from tribe to family, from family to household, and from household to particular persons, the criminal was at last found to be Achan; who upon Joshua's admonition, confessed the fact, viz. that he had secreted * a royal robe, two hundred shekels of silver, and a large wedge of gold, and when, upon search, the things were produced in the presence of all the people, they took him, and all his family, his cattle, his tent, and all his moveables, and carrying them, to a neighbouring valley, (which, from that time, * in allusion to this man's

was found guilty, then were there as many lots put in as there were families in that tribe; after that, as many as there were householders in that family; and at last, as many as there were heads in that household, until the criminal was detected. But others will have it, that this was done by the high-priest alone, who, by a divine inspiration, at that time, was enabled, without any more to do, to declare who the criminal then was; *Saurin's Dissertations*, vol. iii.; *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentaries* on Josh. vii.

* In the original, this robe is called a garment of Shinar, i. e. of Babylon; and the general opinion is, that the richness and excellency of it consisted not so much in the stuff whereof it was made, as in the colour whereof it was dyed; which most suppose to have been scarlet, a colour in high esteem among the ancients, and for which the Babylonians were justly famous. Bochart however maintains, that the colour of this robe was various, and not all of one sort; that the scarlet colour the Babylonians first received from Tyre, but the party-colour, whether so woven or wrought with the needle, was of their own invention, for which he produces many passages out of Heathen authors. Such as,

Non ego pretulerim Babylonica pista superbè

Texta, Semiramia quæ variantur acu. *Mart. Ep. lib. 8.*

Hæc mihi Memphitis tellus dat munera, victa est

Pectine Niliaco jam Babylonis acus. *Ibid. lib. 14.*

with many more citations out of several other writers. However this be, it is certain, that the robe could not fail of being a very rich and splendid one, and therefore captivated either Achan's pride or rather covetousness; since his purpose seems to have been, not so much to wear it himself, as to sell it for a large price; *Bochart's Phaleg. lib. i. c. 9.*; *Saurin, lib. iii. dissertation 3.*

* Though his name was primarily Achan, yet, ever after his execution, he was called *Acher*, (so the Syriac version, Josephus, Athanasius, Basil, and others, mentioned by Bochart, name him), which signifies *the troubler of Israel*; *Patrick's Commentary*, on Josh. viii.

name,

name, was called *the valley of Achar*), || there they stoned him, and those belonging to his family, as accomplices in his crimes. Whatever Goods or utensils he had, these they consumed with fire, and so raised a great heap of stones over all, that thereby they might perpetuate the memory of the crime, and deter others from the like provocation.

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

After this execution of the divine justice, God ordered Joshua, to attempt the conquest of Ai once more, and promised him success; which might best be obtained, as he told him, by laying an ambuscade somewhere behind the city, towards Bethel. † Thirty thousand men were therefore drawn out, and sent away by night upon this expedition, with instructions to enter the city as soon as the signal (which was to be a spear, with a banner upon it) was given them: And early next morning, he himself marched, with the remainder of his forces, against the city. As soon as the king of Ai perceived him, he sallied hastily out of the town, with all his troops, and all his people, and fell upon

The taking
and sacking
of Ai.

|| Since the law against sacrilege condemns transgressors to the flames, and God commanded the person here guilty to be burnt accordingly, *Josh. vii. 18.* the Jews affirm, that Achan was actually burnt; and whereas it is said in the text that *he was stoned*, they think that this was done, not judicially, but accidentally by the people, who were so highly provoked, that they could not forbear casting stones at him as he was led to execution; *Vid. Munst. on Josh. vii.*

† Some are of opinion, that this detachment of thirty thousand made up the whole force that was employed in this expedition against Ai; and that, out of these, five thousand were sent to lie in ambush, that, at a convenient time, they might set fire to the city: But this is so directly contrary to God's command, of Joshua's *taking all the people of war with him*, which accordingly, in chap. viii. 3, 11. we are told he did, that there is no foundation for it. And therefore it is reasonable to suppose, that the whole body designed for the ambuscade consisted of thirty thousand men; and that the five thousand, mentioned in the 12th verse, was a small party detached from these, in order to creep closer to the city, while the five and twenty thousand kept themselves ambushed behind the mountains, until a proper signal was given, both from the city, when this small party had taken it, and from the grand army, when they had repulsed the enemy, that then they might come out from their ambush, and intercept them as they were making their flight; *Patrick's Commentary on Josh. viii.*

A. M. 2553, &c. Ant. Christ. 1451, &c. from Josh. i. to the end. the Israelites, who, at the first onset, fled as if they had been under some great terrour. But this was only a feint, to draw the enemy into the plain; and therefore, as soon as Joshua saw, that, by this stratagem, the city was pretty well emptied, he gave the signal to the ambuscade; which, finding it now defenceless, immediately entered, and set it on fire.

By the ascent of the smoak, Joshua discerned that his men had got possession of the town; and therefore, facing about he began to charge the enemy very briskly; who, little expecting that the Israelites would rally, began now to think of retreating to the city; but when they saw it all in flames, and the party which had set it on fire issuing out, and just going to fall upon their rear, they were so dismayed and dispirited, that they had power neither to fight nor fly. So that all the army was cut to pieces; the city was burnt, and made an heap of rubbish; every soul in it, man, woman, and child, were put to the sword; and the King, who was taken prisoner, was ordered to be hanged upon a gibbet till sun-set, when he was taken down, thrown in at a gate of the city, and a heap of stones raised over him.

After this action was over, the cattle, and all the spoil of the city, was, by God's appointment, given to the soldiers; and as Joshua was now not far distant from the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, this reminded him of the command which (c) Moses had given, about reading the law, with the blessings and curses thereunto annexed, from those two mountains; which he not only ordered to be done, but had an altar likewise erected, whereon not only sacrifices were offered, to give God the glory of all his victories, but † an abridgment of the law, or some remarkable part of it, was likewise engraven, at the same time that

(c) Deut. xi. 29. and xxvii. 1, — 13.

† It is a question (as we said before, page 24. in the notes) among the learned, what it was that was written upon these stones? But besides other conjectures already enumerated, some think it not unlikely to have been a copy of the covenant, by which the children of Israel acknowledged, that they held the land of Canaan of God, upon condition that they observed his laws, to which they and their posterity had obliged themselves; for this was the third time that the covenant between God and his people was renewed; and therefore the contents of that covenant might be very proper at this time to be thus monumentally recorded; *Patrick on Deut. xxvii. 3. and Josh. viii. 32.*

the

the whole of it was read in a large assembly of all the tribes.

Joshua's success against the two towns of Jericho and Ai, and the terrible slaughter he had made among their inhabitants, had * so alarmed the kings on that side the Jordan, that they confederated together, and entered into league for their mutual defence: but the Gibeonites foreseeing the destruction that was hastening upon them, endeavoured by a stratagem to gain a peace with the Israelites, which they effected in this manner. — They chose a certain number of artful men, who † were instructed to feign themselves

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.
The league
craftily ac-
quired by
the Gibeon-
ites.

* The Jews in the Talmud tell us likewise, that a farther cause of the Gibeonites fear was, the inscription which they had met with upon Mount Ebal, where, among other parts of the law which Joshua (as they pretend) wrote upon stones, they found the orders which both he and Moses had received from God, utterly to extirpate all the inhabitants of the land of Canaan; *Saurin, lib. iii. dissertation 4.*

† It is a question among the casuists, whether the Gibeonites could, with a good conscience, pretend that they were foreigners, and tell a lie to save their lives? And to this Puffendorf (*Droit de la nature, lib. iv. c. 2.*) thus replies: *The artifice of the Gibeonites, says he, had nothing blameable in it, nor does it properly deserve the name of a lie: For what crime is there in any one's making use of an innocent fiction, in order to elude the fury of an enemy that would destroy all before them? Nor did the Israelites indeed properly receive any damage from this imposture: For what does any one lose in not shedding the blood of another, when he has it in his power to take from him all his substance, after having so weakened and disarmed him that he is no more able to rebel against him?* But the opinion of this great man seems to be a little erroneous in this case. Had the Israelites indeed been a pack of common murderers, who, without any commission from Heaven, were carrying blood and desolation into countries where they had no right; or had the Gibeonites been ignorant that a miraculous Providence conducted these conquerors; the fraud which they here put upon them might then be deemed innocent: For there is no law that obliges us, under the pretence of sincerity, to submit to such incendiaries, and merciless usurpers, as are for setting fire to our cities, and putting us and our families to the edge of the sword. But the case of the Gibeonites was particular; and if in other things they went contrary to truth, in this they certainly adhered to it, when they told Joshua, *We are come, because of the name of the Lord thy God, for we have heard of the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, &c.*; Josh. ix. 9, 10. The idea which they had conceived

A. M.
2353, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

themselves ambassadors come from a far distant country, in order to obtain a league with the people of Israel: and, to gain credit to this their pretence, they dressed themselves in old cloaths, had old clouted shoes on their feet, carried dry musty bread in their bags, and the bottles wherein they kept their wine were * all sadly tarnished and torn. In this plight they came to the camp at Gilgal; and being introduced to Joshua, they told him "That the fame of many
" miracles which God had wrought for them in the land
" of Egypt, and the wonderful successes wherewith he had
" blessed their arms against every power that had opposed
" them in their coming to that place, had reached even
" their remote and distant country; for which reason their
" states and rulers had sent them a long way, that, by all
" means imaginable, they might obtain a peace with a
" people so renowned all the world over, and so favoured
" and honoured by gods:" and then shewing their cloaths, shoes, and other tokens of the long journey they had taken, they solemnly assured them, that all these things were quite new when at first they set out from home, and thence left them to judge how distant and remote their country was.

This plausible story, confirmed, as they thought, by so many evidences, gained credit with the Israelites, so that they entered into amicable alliance with them; and the other took care to have the treaty immediately ratified, both by Joshua and all the princes of the congregation. In three days time the imposture was discovered; and they who pretended to come from a distant country were found to be near neighbours, and some of those very people whom

conceived of the God of Israel should have put them upon some other expedient than that of lying and deceit. They should have inquired (as far as the obscure dispensation they were under would have permitted them) into the cause of God's severity against them. They should have acknowledged, that it was their grievous sins which drew down this heavy judgment upon their nation; and after they had repented thereof in sackcloth and ashes, they should have committed the rest to Providence, never doubting but that he, who had changed the very course of nature to punish the guilty, would always find out some means or other to save the penitent: but this they did not do; and therefore they were culpable; *Saurin, vol. iii. dissertation 4.*

* These bottles were not of glass, or clay, as those in use among us, but were made of leather, in which they formerly (and even now in some countries) kept their wine.

Joshua

Joshua was commissioned to destroy. So that when the thing came to be rumoured about, the people began to murmur against their princes for their indiscretion, and were for having the league cancelled: but as it was confirmed by a solemn oath, this they could not do without incurring the divine displeasure. And therefore, though they might not take away their lives, they might, nevertheless, hold them in a state of servitude, and as long as they lived make them useful drudges, hewers of wood and drawers of water, and the like, which would both punish them much, and prove full as beneficial to the commonwealth: and with this apology the people were appeased. Joshua, however, sent for some of the Gibeonites; and having expostulated the cheat with them, (which they excused upon the score of saving their own lives), he told them what the determination of the princes was, viz. that they should remain in a state of perpetual bondage; which they received without any manner of murmuring, and humbly acquiesced in whatever was thought proper to be imposed upon them.

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

The confederate princes hearing of this separate treaty which the Gibeonites had made with Israel, were resolved to be revenged of them for their desertion of the common cause; and accordingly, joining all their forces together, they came and invested their town. The Gibeonites in this distress, not daring to trust to their own strength, sent an express to Joshua for speedy help; who set out with all expedition, and, by quick marches, and the favour of the night, came upon the enemy sooner than they expected, and early next morning fell upon them, and routed them. In this expedition God had all along encouraged Joshua, and promised him success; and therefore, as the confederate forces were endeavouring to escape, and save themselves by flight, he poured such a storm of hail upon them, as destroyed more than what perished by the sword.

The conquest of the confederate kings in the south, and sun and moon's standing still.

Joshua, on the other hand, was very desirous to make the most of this happy opportunity; and therefore, in full chase of victory, he addressed himself to God, that the sun and moon might stand still, and so prolong the day until he had completed his victory; which God was pleased to grant. So that this was the most memorable day that ever happened, wherein the *Almighty listened to the voice of a man*, to change the course of nature, and stop the motion of those rolling orbs.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Cnris.
1451, &c.
from Joshi.
to the end.

The confederate kings being thus put to flight, and either frightened at the storm of hail, or at the close pursuit of the enemy, made to a cave near † Makkedah, and there ran in to hide themselves. But Joshua, having intelligence of it, commanded the cave to be blocked up, and a guard to be set over it, and so continued his pursuit, that he might cut off as many as he possibly could before they reached to their fortified towns. In his return he ordered the cave to be opened, and the kings to be brought forth; and when execution was done upon them, he caused their bodies to be hanged upon several trees until the evening, when they were taken down, and cast into the cave, where they thought to have hid themselves; so that the place of their intended sanctuary became their sepulchre. After this signal victory, Joshua took all the southern parts of Canaan; which afterwards belonged to the tribes of Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, Dan, and Ephraim: And having thus ended his second campaign, he returned with his army to the camp at Gilgal.

The conquest of the confederate kings in the north.

Here he continued for some time without entering upon any fresh action, until several princes of the north of Canaan, under Jabin, king of Hazor, confederated together, and raised a vast number of forces, which encamped not far from † the waters of Merom; and what

† It was a city in the tribe of Judah, about eight miles distant from Eleutheropolis; which place, though it is no where mentioned in the Scripture-history, because it was built after the destruction of Jerusalem, is nevertheless frequently taken notice of by Eusebius and Jerom, as a point from whence they measure the distances of other places. Its name imports a *free city*, and was itself situate in the tribe of Judah; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 2. c. 4.

† These waters are generally supposed by learned men to be the lake Semechon, which lies between the head of the river Jordan and the lake Gennesareth; since it is agreed on all hands, that the city Hazor, where Jabin reigned, was situate upon this lake. But others think, that the waters of Merom, or Merome, were somewhere about the brook Kishon; since there is a place of that name mentioned in the account of the battle against Sisera, Judg. v. 21. And 'tis more rational to think, that the confederate kings advanced as far as the brook Kishon, and to pass which led in to their country, to hinder Joshua from penetrating it, or even to attack him in the country where he himself lay encamped, than to imagine, that they waited for him in the midst of their own country, leaving all Galilee at his mercy, and the whole tract from

* what made the army more formidable, was the great number of horses and * armed chariots they had, whereas the Israelites were all foot. This, however, did not in the least discourage Joshua, who, in pursuance of the instructions which God had given him, immediately took the field, marched directly towards the enemy, fell suddenly upon them, and put all (except those * that made their escape

A. M. 2553, &c.
Ant. Christ. 1451, &c.
from Josh. i. to the end.

from the brook of Kishon, to the lake Semechon; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*; vol. 3. c. 5.; *Reland's Palest. lib.* 1. c. 40. and *Calmet on Josh.* xi. 5.

* Their whole army, according to Josephus, was computed to amount to three hundred thousand foot, ten thousand horse, and two thousand chariots; and to oppose against these the Israelites had no horse in their armies, because God had interdicted them, (Deut. xvii. 16.), lest a traffic into Egypt for that sort of cattle should be a snare to engage them in idolatry; or lest, having a quantity thereof, they should put their confidence rather in them, than in the divine assistance; for which reason the prophet denounces *a woe upon them that go down into Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are strong, but they look not to the Holy One of Israel, neither seek they the Lord*; Isa. xxxi. 1.

* The chariots, which the ancient historians usually call *currus falciferi, covini falciferi, quadrigæ falcatæ, ἄρματα δερναιοφάγα, &c.* are described after the following manner: "The beam to which the horses were fastened, was armed with spikes with iron-points, which projected forward: The yokes of the horses had two cutting falchions, of three cubits length: The axle-trees had fixed to them two iron-spits, with scythes at their extremities; the spokes of the wheels were armed with javelins, and the very fellows with scythes, which tore every thing they met with to pieces. The axle-tree was longer, and the wheels stronger than usual, that they might be the better able to bear a shock, and the chariot less liable to be overturned." The charioteer, who was covered all over with armour, sat in a kind of tower made of very solid wood, about breast high, and sometimes men well armed were put into the chariot, and fought from thence with darts and arrows. So that a dreadful slaughter these machines must at first have made, when they met with the enemies troops; but in time, when men came to find out the way of declining them, they did not so much execution, and were consequently disused; *Vid. Diodorus Siculus, lib. 17.; Quint. Curtius, lib. 4.; Xenophon Cyropæd. lib. 6.; Lucretius, de Rer. nat. lib. 6.*

* Some Jewish authors will needs have it, that when Joshua went into the land of Canaan, he proposed three things to the

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

escape into other countries) to the sword; hamstringing their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire. Jabin had been the head of the confederacy against him; and therefore he killed him, and caused his city to be burnt to the ground; but the other cities, whose inhabitants were slain in battle, he left standing, and gave the plunder of them to the soldiers.

The division
of the land
of Canaan
among the
tribes.

Thus Joshua subdued all the land of Canaan † by degrees: He put its inhabitants, its kings, (who were one

inhabitants thereof, either that they should leave the country, or come and make their submission, or take up arms and fight him. But this is said in some measure to excuse the Jewish general, and to mollify the rigour of his proceedings. His express command from God was, to extirpate the seven nations, without making any treaty, or giving quarter: And tho' the Gibeonites by guile had obtained a kind of league with him, yet the conditions which he thereupon imposed, were so very hard, that they could not but deter others from making the like attempt. It is not therefore to be wondered, that the Canaanites, who saw themselves drove to the necessity either of death or slavery, (after they had tried the fate of their arms so often to no purpose), should endeavour to make their escape from a people every where victorious, and who were enjoined to be cruel and remorseless by their very God who had given them this success. Nor can we suppose but that God, who was minded to make room for his own people, did (according to his promise, Exod. xxiii. 27.) inject upon this occasion a terrour extraordinary into the natives of the country, and make them desire to be gone: And when they were desirous to be gone, they had ports lying upon the Mediterranean sea very commodious for their purpose. For whether the towns of Tyre and Sidon were at this time built or no, it is certain, that the places where these towns stood could not but be proper harbours for shipping; and as the Phœnicians were still masters of the sea-coasts, by their assistance the Canaanites might make their escape into what parts they pleased. The Phœnicians, much about this time, did certainly send out a vast many colonies; but as it cannot be supposed, that so small a country should produce such swarms, the greatest part of them are presumed to be the refugees of Canaan, who made their escape by shipping to all the coasts which lay round the Mediterranean and Ægean seas, and even to other parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, as the learned Bochart has given us a large account in his *Canaan*, from p. 345, to p. 699. *Calmet's Dissert. sur les pays ou se sauverent les Cananéens chassés par Josué.*

† These great achievements may be allowed to have taken up some years. The history indeed informs us, that *Joshua made war*

one and thirty in number), and all the giants, that dwelt therein, except some few that still remained among the Philistines, to the sword; and having now extended his conquest, as far as it was convenient at that time, he began to think of dividing the country among the tribes that were yet unprovided for, and of dismissing the two tribes and an half who had accompanied him in the wars, but had their habitations already settled by Moses, on the east side of the river Jordan. To this purpose he appointed commissioners, who should take an exact survey of the country, and bring in a full report without delay; which, when he had done, † the country was divided into equal

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

war a long time with all these kings, Josh. xi. 18. And from the words of Caleb, wherein he gives Joshua an account of his age, and that it was five and forty years since he was sent a spy to Kadesh-Barnea, there cannot be well less than between six and seven years spent in this war: and why the war was so long continued, God himself assigns this reason:—*I will not drive them out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee: By little and little will I drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased and inherit the land*; Exod. xxiii. 29, 30.

† Those who are minded to know what particular towns and territories fell to each tribe, had best consult what Josephus in his Jewish antiquities; Jerom De locis Hebraicis; Reland, De urbibus et vicis Palestinæ; Masius in Joshuam; Fuller, in his Pisgah-sight; Raleigh in his history, part i. l. 2; Wells, in his Geography of the Old Testament, vol. 2.; Patrick, Pool, Le Clerc, and several others, in their commentaries, have said upon this subject. We shall make this one remark, which Masius, in his rich commentary upon Joshua, furnishes us with, viz. that as Jacob and Moses, at the approach of their deaths, foretold the very soil and situation of every particular country that should fall to each tribe; so, upon this division by lots, it accordingly came to pass. To the tribe of Judah, there fell a country abounding with vines, and pasture-grounds, Gen. xlix. 11. To that of Ashur, one plentiful in oil, iron, and brass, Deut. xxxiii. 24, 25. To that of Naphtali, one extending from the west to the south of Judea, ib. xxxiii. 23. To that of Benjamin, one in which the temple was afterwards built, ib. xxxiii. 12. To those of Zebulun and Issachar, such as had plenty of sea-ports, Gen. xlix. 13. To those of Ephraim and Manasseh, such as were renowned for their precious fruits, Deut. xxxiii. 14. And to those of Simeon and Levi, no particular countries at all; for as much as the former had a portion with Judah, and the other was interspersed among the several tribes. Since therefore (as our commentator reasons) each particular

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Chrif.
1451, &c.
from Jofh. i.
to the end.

equal portions, for which each tribe (d) to God's directions) caft lots : But becaufe fome tribes were larger, and fome territories richer than others, Jofhua and Eleazar, together with the princes of the people, took care to adjust the proportion of the land to the largenefs of the tribe, and in fubdividing that, to confider the number of each family and household; purfuing exactly the orders which God gave to his fervant Mofes : (e) *Unto thefe the land fhall be divided for an inheritance, according to the number of names. To many thou fhalt give the more inheritance; and to few, thou fhalt give the lefs inheritance.——Notwithftanding the land fhall be divided by lot;——according to lot fhall the poffeffion thereof be divided among many, and few.*

Having thus divided the country on the weft fide of the Jordan, Jofhua had a little place given him for his own habitation not far from Shiloh, where, after the wars, the tabernacle was fet up, that he might have an opportunity of confulting God upon any occafion; and, after all things were in this manner regulated, he called together the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manaffeh, who had ferved for almoft feven years, as auxiliaries in the wars of Canaan, and gave them an honourable difmiffion. “ He acknowledged, that they had duly executed the condition which they promifed to Mofes, in accompanying their brethren, and helping them to fubdue their enemies, and commended their courage and fidelity for fo doing. He exhorted them, now that they were going to feparate from the tabernacle, never to neglect the fervice of God, but to bear always in mind thofe venerable laws which he had given them by his great legiflator. He advifed them to diftribute a fhare of the rich booty they had taken from the Canaanites, among their brethren on the other fide of Jordan; becaufe though they had not partaken of the peril of the late war, they had neverthelefs done them great fervice, in protecting their families from the infults of their enemies on every fide:” And * with thefe acknowledgments and exhortations,

particular lot answered fo exactly to each prediction, it muft needs be the height of infolence or ftupidity not to acknowledge the divine infpiration in thefe predictions, and the divine direction in thefe lots,

(d) Jofh. xiv. 2. (e) Numb. xxvi. 53. &c.

* Jofephus, in the fpeech which he introduces Jofhua making to the Reubenites, &c. at their parting, concludes with thefe words;

hortations, together with many sincere wishes for their prosperity and welfare, * he sent them away ; but they had not been long gone, before a sad misunderstanding had like to have happened between them and the other tribes.

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

Upon their arrival on the other side of Jordan, they erected an altar near the place where they and their brethren had miraculously passed over, not for any religious use, but as a memorial to succeeding generations, that though they were parted by the river, yet they were of the same extract and religion, and held an equal right to the tabernacle at Shiloh, and to the worship of God performed there, that the inhabitants of the other side had. But whether those on the other side were misinformed or misapprehended their intent, so it was, that they fell into a violent rage against them, as apostates from the true religion ; and immediately took up arms for the vindication of the worship and religion of their forefathers, and to avenge the cause of God upon the heads and chief authors of this defection. But before they proceeded to these extremities, they were advised by their rulers to suspend the execution of their wrath, until they had sent a deputation to them in order to know the reason of their build-

words : — “ But, I pray ye, let no distance of place set limits to our friendship. The interposition of rivers must never divide our affections ; for on which bank soever, we are all Hebrews still. Abraham was the common father of us all, let our abode be where it will. It was from one and the same God, that all our forefathers received their being ; and that God we are all to worship, according to the ordinances and institutions left us by Moses. So long as we stand firm to that way of religion, we may be sure of the favour and protection of that God, for our comfort ; but when ever you apostatize into an hankering after strange gods, the God of your fathers will cast you off ;” *Jewish Antiq. lib. 5. c. 1.*

* *The Chronicon Samaritanum*, (if we may believe what it reports, page 92, 93.) tells us, that when Joshua sent the Reubenites away, he appointed Nephiel to be his deputy on the other side of Jordan : that he clothed him with a royal robe, put a crown on his head, and made him ride on an horse of state, whilst a crier went before him, proclaiming, “ This is the king of the two tribes and an half, the president of justice, the director of affairs, and the general in the camp : Let his determination be conclusive. In all difficult causes let him desire an answer from Eleazar the high-priest ; and if any one shall contradict his sentence, or withdraw from his allegiance, it shall be lawful for any one to kill that man, and the whole congregation shall be blameless.”

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Christ,
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

ing such an altar; which accordingly they did, and made choice of Phineas, the son of Eleazer, with ten other persons of eminent distinction, to go upon the embassy. As soon as they were come into the land † of Gilead, * they represented the great surprise that the rest of the tribes were in at their building this altar; and told them very roundly, that they feared it portended a defection into idolatry. To dissuade them therefore from that, they put them in mind of the calamities which God had formerly sent upon them for their worship of Baal-peor; and that if so lately he had been so severe upon them for the offence of one man, *viz.* Achan only, what might they not expect, when two tribes and an half were going to make a general revolt! And as they suspected that the absence of the tabernacle might give some occasion to this innova-

† Gilead, which took its name from Gilead, the son of Machir, and grandson of Manasseh, is often put for the whole country that lies on the east side of Jordan, which the children of Israel took from the Moabites and Midianites, *etc.*

* Josephus makes Phineas the speaker upon this occasion, who delivers his commission in words to this effect:—"We are very sensible, that the crime charged upon you at present is too heinous to be punished by words only; but we have not taken up arms (hand over head) to execute a vengeance according to the degree of the iniquity: For it is out of respect to our allies, and in hopes that second and sounder thoughts may bring you to better reason, that we are engaged upon this embassy, and speak in this assembly. We do but desire to be sincerely informed, upon what motives, and with what design you have now raised this altar. If you have done it out of any pious end, we have no quarrel with you; but if you are gone over to a false worship, it is for our God, and our religion, that we must draw our swords against you. We speak our fears; for we cannot think it credible yet, that a people so well instructed in the will and in the laws of God, our friends and allies that we have but just now parted with; a people newly established in the lot of a plentiful possession by God's special grace and providence; we cannot, I say, believe you to be so insensible and ungrateful, as to abandon the holy tabernacle, the ark, the altar, and the worship of your forefathers, to join with the Canaanites in the worship of false gods: Or if unhappily you should have been so misled, do but repent, and disclaim your error, and return to that reverence you owe to the laws of God, and of your country, and you shall be still received," &c.; *Jewish Antiquities, lib. 5. c. 1.*

tion,

tion, they invited them to come, and live among them, where they might not want an opportunity of serving God, according to the custom of their ancestors.

Concerned to hear the ill opinion which their brethren had thus conceived of them, the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites * protested their innocence of any idolatrous intention, and made a solemn appeal to God, that so far were they from setting up any altar in opposition to his, that the only design of that structure was, to perpetuate their title to the service of the tabernacle, and to prevent their latest posterity from being excluded from it. Which when Phineas and the rest of the deputies heard, they expressed no small satisfaction; and as they related the account of the whole matter upon their return, the people were infinitely pleased with the result of their embassy, and changed their angry thoughts of war into the tender affections of brotherly love and peace: While the Reubenites, on the other hand, to take away all farther umbrage of suspicion, called the altar by the name of *Ed*, as being intended for a standing *witness* (for so the word signifies) that, though they lived at a distance from the rest of their brethren, yet had they both but one origin, and one God, who was the common God and father of all Israel.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1457, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

* If we can suppose any truth in the Samaritan tradition, Nephel, who is said to have been Joshua's lieutenant over the two tribes and a half, may very properly be thought the person who answered Phineas in these words, which Josephus thus put in his mouth:—"We are not conscious of having ever departed from our alliance, neither are we, in any sort, guilty of that affectation of novelty in erecting this altar, which is now charged upon us. We know but one God, and that God is the God of all the Hebrews; and but one altar, which is the brazen altar before the tabernacle. As for this altar here, which we are suspected for, it was never intended for any religious use, but only for a civil memorial to future times of our friendship and alliance, and rather to keep us steady in our ancient religion, than to be any ways introductive to the violation of it. We can safely appeal to God, that we had no such thought in setting up this altar as is imputed to us: And therefore let us intreat you to have a better opinion of your brethren for the future, than to think us guilty of so mortal an apostacy from the rites and customs of our progenitors, a sin not to be expiated in any of the sons of Abraham, but with the loss of his life;" *Jewish Antiq. lib. v. c. 1.*

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

The speech
and death
of Joshua
and Elea-
zar, and the
interment
of Joseph's
bones,

Thus were the Israelites, on both sides of the river Jordan, settled in a quiet possession of their conquests; when Joshua, being now grown old, and perceiving the time of his death approaching, called a general assembly of the princes and magistrates, and as many of the common people as could be got together upon this occasion, to Shechem; and having, in a very tender and affectionate speech, enumerated the many blessings which God's providence had bestowed upon them and their ancestors; how he had preserved them in all their dangers and distresses, and relieved them in all their wants; had made them victorious over all their enemies, and from a mean beginning, raised them to the highest degree of reputation, and brought them into the quiet possession of a land that abounded with all manner of plenty; in gratitude to so great a protector and benefactor, he exhorted them to a faithful observance of his laws, and invited them to a solemn renewal of the covenant which their forefathers had made with him. Which when they had done, he not only recorded the covenant in the book of the law, but set up a great stone likewise, under an oak, near a place of religious worship, as a testimony against them, in case they should prevaricate from God's service; and being now in the hundred and tenth year of his age, * not long after this he died, and

* Jesus the son of Sirach, gives us a long commendation of Joshua, Ecclus. xlv. 1. &c.; but Josephus is more concise in his character, where he tells us,—“That he was a man of political prudence, and endued also with a singular felicity of popular eloquence in expressing his thoughts; brave and indefatigable in war; and no less just and dexterous in peace; and, in short, that he was a person qualified for all great purposes.” He is generally reputed to be the author of the book that goes under his name. In the 26th verse of the last chapter, it is expressly said, that *he wrote these things*, Ecclus. xlv. 1. The son of Sirach has made him successor to Moses in the prophetic ministry. And both the church and synagogue have all looked upon the book as canonical. The truth is, Joshua was the only sacred penman, we know of, that the Israelites had in his age. After he had finished the division of the land, it is said, chap. xxiii. 1. that he had many years of great leisure, which he very probably employed in giving an account of the death and burial of Moses and Eleazar, and from thence continued a narrative of what had been transacted under his own administration, filling it up with a general terrour of the settlements of the tribes, which was highly expedient for the Israelites to have recorded,

was buried at Timna-ferah, in mount Ephraim, a place which the Israelites, in acknowledgment of his great services, had given him.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Anno Christi.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

In a short time after, Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, who lived near Joshua, and died soon after him, was buried not far from him, in one of the hills of Ephraim, † a place

corded, in order to prevent confusions about their inheritances in future ages. Now, if this supposition be right, the work of Joshua must begin where that of Moses ended, viz. at the 34th chapter of Deuteronomy, and ended at the 27th verse of the 24th chapter of Joshua. For as Joshua, at the end of Deuteronomy, added an account of Moses's death; so what we find from the 28th verse of the 24th chapter of Joshua to the end of that book, was unquestionably not written until Joshua and all the elders his cotemporaries were gone off the stage, and was therefore added to the end of the book of Joshua by some sacred penman, (most probably by Samuel), who was afterwards employed to record the subsequent state of affairs of Israel; *Shuckford's Connection*, vol. iii. lib. 12.; and *Patrick's Commentary*, on Josh. xxiv. 32. But there is not the like certainty of another book of Joshua's, which the Samaritans preserve with much respect, and make great use of in the support of their pretensions against the Jews; neither can we tell whether Joshua was the author of that prayer which the Jews repeat as oft as they go into the synagogues, and begins thus:—*It is our duty to praise the Lord of the universe, and to celebrate the creation of the world; for he hath not made us like unto the nations of the earth, but hath prepared for us an inheritance infinitely richer and greater, &c.*; *Wagenfahl's Tela ignea Satanæ*, page 223.; and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

† This place is, in the Hebrew, called *the hill of Phineas*; it being customary in those days for men to call places by the name of their eldest son. But then the question is, To whom did the Israelites give this hill? The most probable answer is, that they gave it to Eleazar; for he being the high-priest at the time of the division of the land, they thought proper to give him a peculiar portion, distinct from other cities of the priests, which were all in the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Simeon, and none in the tribe of Ephraim, Josh. xxi. 9, 17, 19. And they made choice of this country the rather, that he might be near the tabernacle, which was at Shiloh, and near to Joshua, who lived at Shechem, to be ready, on all occasions, to advise him; and consult the oracle for him. But then against this there lies an objection, viz. that no Levite or Priest was to have any portion in the division of the land; and therefore it is a received opinion among the Jews, that either Eleazar or Phineas had this inheritance in right of his wife: Though we cannot see why the high-priest especially, who was certainly the second

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

place which the Israelites had in like manner presented him with, and which afterwards descended to Phineas, his son, and successor in the priesthood. And as the funerals of these two great men, so near the same time and place, called to remembrance the bones of Joseph, which at his request, * had been brought out of Egypt, but not yet interred; the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh took this opportunity to perform their obsequies to the remains of their great progenitor, in a parcel of ground near Shechem, which Jacob having formerly bought, had (f) given to his son Joseph, and was now become the inheritance of his posterity.

THE OBJECTION.

“ JOSHUA, no doubt, was a very expert general, and the
“ success of his arms against the Canaanites makes no
“ mean figure in history; but a great deal of this may be
“ resolved into the treachery and perfidiousness, the folly
“ and infatuation of those that pretended to oppose him.
“ How despicable an instrument soever an harlot may be, yet
“ certainly Rahab stood Joshua in no small stead; when she,
“ concealed the spies, and (as we may suppose) helped them,
“ to the best intelligence that she could. In the New Te-
“ stament indeed, she is ranked among very good compa-
“ ny, and her character and commendation (g) is twice
“ commemorated; but for what reason we cannot tell, un-
“ less it be (h) for lying to the government, and betraying
person in the government, might not have a mansion-house,
and some domains allotted him, for the greater state and digni-
ty of his living, without any great infringement upon the ge-
neral laws; *Patrick's Commentary*, on Josh. xxiv. 33.

* It may reasonably be thought, that the bodies of the rest of the sons of Jacob, from whom the twelve tribes descended, were brought into Canaan, to be there interred, as Josephus relates from ancient tradition, *Antiquities*, lib. ii. c. 4.; and as St. Stephen confirms it, Acts vii. 16. For though Joseph excelled them all in dignity, and gave this special charge about his body, yet every tribe, no doubt, had as great a regard for their progenitor, and would be inclined to do the same for their fathers, that Joseph's descendents did for him: But whether they buried them in the sepulchre of Machpelah, or in some eminent place in their own tribe, as Joseph was, there is no one that gives us any account; *Patrick's Commentary*, on Josh. xxiv. 32.

(f) Gen. xlviii. 22. (g) Heb. xi. 31.; and Jam. ii. 25.

(h) Christianity as old as the creation, p. 263.

“ her

“ her country into the hands of its most cruel enemies ; A. M.
 “ which is surely an example that deserves our detestation ^{2553, etc.}
 “ rather than praise. Ant. Chris. 1451, etc.

“ The Israelites were commanded by God (whose in- ^{from Josh. i. to the end.}
 “ junctions we are not to dispute) *(i)* to have no mercy
 “ upon the inhabitants of Canaan, but to smite and utterly
 “ destroy them ; and therefore it looks like mere madness
 “ and infatuation, that a people who knew themselves de-
 “ voted to destruction, (instead of going over to the ene-
 “ my, or opposing them by piece-meals), did not confede-
 “ rate all together, either to expel those invaders from their
 “ countries, or to sell their lives and liberties at as dear a
 “ price as possible.

“ Some of these nations were accounted a bold and
 “ warlike people ; but certainly the inhabitants of Jericho
 “ acted like mere pultroons, when they cooped themselves
 “ up within the walls of the city, and never once thought
 “ of disputing the pass over the river Jordan. For what-
 “ ever we may talk of that wonderful passage, it is evident,
 “ *(k)* from the testimony of travellers, that the river was
 “ no more than a brook in comparison, and fordable in
 “ several places, as *(l)* the Scripture itself allows. But e-
 “ ven suppose it was not, it is no uncommon thing, *(m)* in
 “ history, to read of rivers larger than this, by the force
 “ of some contrary wind, driven back, and their channels
 “ laid dry.

“ For a people observant of his laws, God do doubt
 “ will, and often does, work wonders, in order to give
 “ them an advantage over their enemies ; but it is hard to
 “ conceive, what reason there should be for exerting any
 “ miraculous power in behalf of those, who, as if aghast
 “ of the covenant made with their forefather Abra-
 “ ham, had now omitted the sacrament of circumcision so
 “ long ; and in a short time after, had no manner of regard
 “ to God’s Sabbath, when they went sounding their horns
 “ about Jericho, or rather (as some think) assaulted the
 “ town, and imbrued their hands in the blood of so many
 “ innocents, on that sacred day.

“ Instead of rams horns, which are a little impro-
 “ per, one would think, to make musical instruments of,

(i) Deut. vii. 2.

(k) Sandy’s Travels, lib. iii. p. 141.

(l) Josh. ii. 7.

(m) Vid. Pliny’s Hist. lib. ii. cap. 102. ;
 Dionf. Halicarn. Antiq. Roman. lib. vi. p. 351. and lib. vii. p. 409.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

“ a soldier would be tempted to say, that the Israelites
“ made use of battering-rams upon this occasion : but
“ those who have studied the philosophy of sounds, will
“ tell us, that they have a certain natural fitness to break
“ and demolish solid bodies ; or, if this was not the case,
“ from the violent effects of subterraneous eruptions, or
“ the blowing up some magazines of powder, one would
“ really imagine, that the fall of the walls of Jericho was
“ occasioned by some such natural cause.

“ Joshua, as an old experienced general, was doubtless
“ master of many stratagems, which the ignorant herd
“ knew nothing of ; and therefore he might give the word
“ of command for them to shout aloud, when, at the
“ same time, he ordered the match to be laid to the train,
“ that led to the mine under the walls, and so they, poor
“ creatures, might imagine, that it was either their noise,
“ or some miraculous stroke that made them fall ; when,
“ in reality, the whole was affected by nothing else but,
“ some new device in war. But by what means soever
“ he vanquished the city, it seems a little extravagant, if
“ not brutal in him, after he had laid it in ashes, to load it
“ with such heavy imprecations, when he had lost no men,
“ and met with so little molestation in taking it.

“ What the mysterious oracle of Urim and Thummim
“ may be, it is past the skill of man perhaps to know ; but
“ be it what it will, it seems to have done the Israelites no
“ great service, when it could not hinder Joshua and the
“ other princes, no not even Eleazar himself, who wore
“ it, from being imposed on by the Gibeonites. The Gi-
“ beonites indeed acted the crafty part, and since it was to
“ save themselves, were not much to be discommended ;
“ but certainly the Israelites might have known better, than
“ to think themselves bound by an oath that was not only
“ drawn from them by wile and artifice, but was repug-
“ nant likewise to that divine injunction which previously
“ obliged them to extirpate all the Canaanites, even though
“ they sued for peace never so earnestly, and (m) to make
“ no covenant with them, even though they offered to be-
“ come proselytes never so sincerely.

“ The Israelites indeed, according to the representation
“ which Joshua gives us of them, were at the best but a
“ giddy, thoughtless kind of people, elated with succes-
“ ses, dejected with any misfortunes, and wild and boiste-

(m) Deut. vii. 2. &c.

“ ROUS

“ rous in the prosecution of their passions ; for to insult A. M.
 “ over one poor city with imprecations and curses, when ^{2553, etc.}
 “ it already lay in ashes, (as was the case at Jericho), to Ant. Chris.
 “ droop in their courage, and utterly despond, upon a ^{1451, etc.}
 “ small defeat given them at another, (as was the case of from Josh. i.
 “ Ai), and to fly into a flame, take up arms, and vow ^{to the end.} re-
 “ venge, though they knew not well for what, (as was the
 “ case between them and their brethren beyond Jordan),
 “ argues such a baseness of mind, and barbarity of temper,
 “ and rudeness of manners, as but badly become the elect
 “ people of God.

“ But well may the author of this book make thus free
 “ with his people, when he is not afraid to record such
 “ things as cannot but reflect dishonour upon the sacred
 “ attributes of God himself. Ahan indeed was a wicked
 “ man in purloining some part of the plunder to himself ;
 “ but what had his poor children done, that they must be
 “ committed to the same flames ? The city of Ai had given
 “ the Israelites some molestation, and was to be subdued at
 “ all adventures ; but what necessity was there for God to
 “ make use of stratagem and artifice (means which seem
 “ below the greatness of the Almighty, and * which some
 “ nations and generals have rejected, as unworthy brave
 “ men) to give the victory to his own creatures ?

“ To these people of his, indeed, he had been very kind,
 “ in giving them what he did of the land of Canaan ; but
 “ since his promise extended to the whole, since, (n) *from*
 “ *the wilderness, and this Lebanon, unto the great river Eu-*
 “ *phrates; all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea,*
 “ *towards the going down of the sun,* (as he assured Joshua),
 “ *was to be their coast,* it looks a little strange, that God
 “ should falsify his promise, (for all these territories they
 “ never possessed), and thus cut them short.

* It was the expression of Alexander the Great, that he would
 not steal a victory. The ancient Greeks gave notice to their
 enemies, when, and where they should engage them. The old
 Romans knew not what cunning and subtle wiles in carrying on
 war meant ! *Non fraude, neque occulte, sed palam, et armatum,*
populum Romanum hostes suos ulcisci. They sought victory only
 by force and honest fighting, desiring that their enemies might
 be convinced of their valour, and submit to them without re-
 gret, because they were the stronger ; *Calmet's Commentary*
 on Josh. viii.

(n) Josh. i. 4.

“ Other

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

“ Other slips in our author may be excuseable ; his talking of the (o) sanctuary’s being at Shechem, when indisputably it was at Shiloh, may charitably be imputed to some small defect of memory ; but it really shocks one, and is enough to impeach the authority of the book itself, to find recorded in it such passages as seem to leave an imputation of cruelty, craft, and breach of promise, upon God, whom all mankind must allow to be the fountain and foundation of all honour, truth, and goodness.”

Answered,
by shewing
the reason
why the
Canaanites
made no
better defence.

(p) *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods ? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders ? Thou, in thy mercy, hast led forth the people, whom thou hast redeemed ; thou hast guided them in thy strength, unto the holy habitation. The people shall hear, and shall be afraid ; sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. The elders of Edom shall be amazed ; the mighty men of Moab shall tremble, and all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. Fear and dread shall fall upon them. By the greatness of thy arm they shall be as still as a stone, till thy people pass over, O Lord, till thy people pass over, whom thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for them to dwell in ; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hand hath established.*

These words are part of that triumphant song which Moses made upon the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red-sea. They are plain predictions of what befel the Israelites forty years after, and a declaration they are, that the conquest of their country was not only by the order and appointment, but by the immediate help and assistance of God ; (q) for (as the Psalmist expresses it) *they got not the land in possession through their own sword, neither was it their own arm that helped them ; but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.* And if God so immediately concerned himself in the conquest of the country, we need not wonder, that we hear of the people, who were to defend it, being amazed and trembling, and melting away for fear. The Jewish doctors have a tradition, that the vast heaps of waters, piled upon one another, while the Israelites passed over the river Jordan, being seen by the people of Jericho, and other adjacent places, occasioned so

(o) Ibid. xxiv. 25, 26.

(p) Exod. xv. 11, &c.

(q) Psal. xlv. 3, 4.

general

general a consternation, that they never once thought of maintaining the pass. And indeed their consternation must have been very great, when we find them inclosing themselves within their walls, and suffering the Israelites to surround them seven days successively, without even once attempting to make a sally. They saw, in short, that a power superiour to all human opposition was engaged against them; and therefore whatever prior measures they had taken for their mutual defence, upon the approach of an army commanded by one who, when he pleases, (r) *maketh the devices of the people ineffectual; and casteth out the counsels of princes*, they were all broken and disconcerted.

It cannot be denied indeed, but that in ancient times, there was a great affinity between the business of an hostess and an harlot. Those who kept inns, or public-houses for the entertainment of strangers, made no scruple of prostituting their bodies: and for this reason perhaps it is, that, in the Hebrew tongue, there is but one word, *viz. Zonah*, to denote persons of both professions. For this reason very likely it was, that the Septuagint, speaking of Rahab, gives her the appellation of an harlot; and (as the Septuagint was at this time the common translation of the Jews) for this very reason, the two apostles, (s) St. Paul, and St. (t) James, as they found it in the translation, might make use of the same expression. It is to be observed, however, that as the expression is capable of another sense, the Chaldee paraphrast calls her by a word, which comes from the Greek *ἡνδοχστέλια*, or, *a woman that kept a public house*, without any work of infamy; and therefore charity should incline us to think the best of a person, whom both these apostles have ranked with Abraham, the father of the faithful, and propounded as an example of faith and good works; who was admitted into the society of God's people; married into a † noble family of the tribe of Judah; and of whose posterity Christ, the Saviour of the world, was born.

To save the lives of the innocent is certainly a very commendable thing; but whether it may be done by the

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

Rahab not
an harlot.

nor blame-
able for im-
posing on
the king's
officers.

(r) Ibid, xxxiii. 10. (s) Heb. xi. 31. (t) Jam. ii. 25.

† Rahab married Salmon, a prince of Judah, by whom she had Boaz. Boaz was father of Obed, Obed of Jesse, and Jesse of king David: So that Jesus Christ did not disdain to reckon this Canaanitish woman among his ancestors. *Galmet's Dictionary.*

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

help of dissimulation and falsehood, or whether Rahab, in concealing the spies, and pretending to the king's messengers, that they were just gone, did not incur the sin of wilful lying, is a question not so very easy to be resolved. Men, as they are members of a civil society, have certainly a right to truth, and the very design of speech is to be the conveyance of our real sentiments to one another; but some casuists are of opinion, that circumstances may so happen, as to make it both lawful and necessary, not only to disguise the truth, but to impose upon others by a false information. Suppose a madman, for instance, with a drawn sword in his hand, should pursue a friend of mine, with a full intent to kill him; and my friend, by the benefit of some short turning, gives him the drop, so that, having lost sight of him, he comes and demands of me, which way he took; but I, instead of setting him right, point the assassin another way: in this case, I presume, I commit no crime; because the man, in these circumstances, has forfeited all right to truth; nor could I indeed impart it to him, without making myself instrumental to my friend's murder. This, in a great measure, was Rahab's case. Her design was to save the spies from the hands of those that were sent to apprehend them; but in vain had she formed such a design, unless she was resolved to put it in execution; and yet, what other way had she of executing it, but by telling a lie? It had been to no purpose for her to have hid them on the roof of her house, if, for the sake of truth, she had thought herself obliged to discover the place of their concealment; if her silence had given any umbrage of suspicion to their pursuers; if she had not, in short, by a bold assertion, diverted their inquiry some other way. In this case the design and the means of executing it were inseparable. And yet, since a design, which could no ways be executed without the help of a lie, is both praised and proposed in the Scripture, as a pattern for the church to imitate, what right have we to condemn it? Or, upon what presumption can we imagine, that Rahab would have acted more agreeably to the mind of God, in discovering the spies out of respect to truth, than she did, in preserving them by virtue of a feigned story? But there is another way of accounted for Rahab's conduct, and that is this———(u) The author

(u) Shuckford's Connection, vol. iii. lib. 12.

of the Epistle to the Hebrews informs us, that (x) *by faith she perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace*; where the Greek words are not τοῖς ἀπιστοῖς with the unbelievers, but τοῖς ἀπειθήσασι with the disobedient, or those that were not persuaded of the truth of what was told them. But how the inhabitants of Jericho can be said to be unconvinced or disobedient, if God had revealed nothing to them, or required nothing of them, we cannot conceive. Some information must have been given both to them and Rahab, otherwise they could not be condemned for disobedience, nor she commended for her faith; i. e. for believing and acting according to the will of God, made known unto her. Upon the supposition then, that the design of God towards the inhabitants of Canaan was some way or other revealed to the king and people of Jericho, and both he and they had been sufficiently warned to save themselves from the destruction that was coming upon them, if they would not obey; but if Rahab did and acted conformably to the information that was given her, her whole behaviour will not only stand clear of every criminal imputation, but be highly commendable, and justly deserve a rank among those illustrious patterns which the apostle proposes to our imitation, as being a person justified not only by her faith, (y) but her works likewise, *when she received the messengers, and sent them out another way*.

A. M.
2553, &
Ant. Ch. 18.
1451, &
from Josh. i.
to the end.

The declaration which their kind protectress makes to them, (z) *I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you, for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath*, bespeaks the full persuasion of her mind; and therefore, not doubting, but that the ruler of the universe had an uncontrollable right to dispose of all kingdoms and countries according to his good pleasure, she judged it reasonable to obey God rather than man, and thereupon endeavoured, as much as in her lay, to deliver up the land to the true owners, to those whom God, by his donation, had made its rightful proprietors.

An order from heaven most certainly releases the subject from his allegiance to his prince, and the citizen from the engagement he lies under to those that are of the same

(x) Heb. xi. 31. (y) Jam. ii. 25. (z) Josh. ii. 9, 11.

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

society; and therefore Rahab, having such an order, (or at least what was equivalent to it), was at full liberty to espouse what party she pleased, and must have been perfidious to God, and forgetful of her own preservation, if she had acted otherwise than she did. For (a) even setting aside her faith, (for which she is so justly commended in the gospel), if she had heard of the destruction of Pharaoh in Egypt, and of the other two kings on the east side of Jordan, the king of Jericho can hardly be supposed to be ignorant of their fate; and therefore it was as natural for her to be terrified at it, and to provide for her safety, as it was for him to make a brave resistance, or perish in the attempt. If therefore what the Scripture seems to intimate be true, viz. that Joshua was obliged to offer peace, before he made use of the sword against any of the Canaanitish nations; it was as lawful for her, or any other subject, to accept this peace, as it was glorious perhaps for a monarch to refuse it. At least we cannot but think, that the refusal of such advantageous terms from an irresistible conqueror, at the risk of being all infallably massacred by him, for the sake of a king, who (for aught that appears to the contrary) might be a petty tyrant, or for the sake of a people whom fear had rendered incapable of making any tolerable resistance; when perhaps the difference of being under the natural monarch, (if he was really such), or the conqueror, was inconsiderable, or (it may be) on the side of the latter: we cannot but think, I say, that such a refusal would have been an instance of patriotism, not to be expected from a Canaanite, and much less from such a young hostess, as Rahab must have been, since we read of her being the mother of Boaz, above thirty years after this. So that, upon the whole, she acted a part that might naturally be expected from her, no ways inglorious in itself, and highly agreeable to the will of God, when she adjoined herself to those, who, by his almighty arm, were so visibly supported; and abandoned the interest of those, who, upon so many accounts, were very justly devoted to destruction.

Reasons for
God's treat-
ing the Canaanites so
severely.

What the Spirit says unto the church at Thyatira, (b) *I gave her space to repent of her fornication, but she repented not; behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, and I will kill her children with death, and give unto every one according to his works*, is very applicable to the several nations in

(a) Univers. Hist. lib. 1. c. 7. (b) Revel. ii. 21. &c.

the

the land of Canaan. Four hundred years were to intervene between the commencement of the promise to Abraham, and this completion of it; and the reason which God gives for this long delay is, that (c) *the iniquity of the Amorites* (and by the Amorites he means all the other nations of Canaan) *was not yet full*: And (d) *even though* (as the author of the book of Wisdom argues) *he could have destroyed them all with one rough word, yet executing his judgments by little and little, he gave them place of repentance, not being ignorant that they were an haughty generation, and that their malice was bred in them, and their cogitation would never be changed.* For instead of reforming, the only effect which this delay had, was to make them more confirmed in wickedness, and because (e) *this sentence against their evil works was not speedily executed, therefore were their hearts the fuller set in them to do evil.*

What the nature and heinousness of their iniquities were, we may best learn from (f) the many precautions which God gives his people against them; *for he hated them* (as the (g) same author has drawn up the articles of accusation against them) *for doing most odious works: of witchcraft, and wicked sacrifices, for their merciless murdering of children devouring of man's flesh, and feasting upon blood;* and if we may suppose that God, some way or other, had given these nations sufficient notice of his intended severity against them if they did not repent; had abundant reason to preserve his own people from the infection of the abominations: and, before their extirpation was executed, did, (h) by his servant Joshua, offer them conditions of peace: Though the divine counsels are a secret to us; yet (even upon this face of things) we cannot find any fault with his treatment of them, since, when he had given them *space to repent, and they repented not*, his justice was certainly then at liberty to take what vengeance his divine wisdom should think fit.

And indeed this seems to be one of the reasons why God divided the river for the Israelites, who were to be the instruments of this his vengeance, to pass over, viz. That thereby he might inject a terrour into the inhabitants of Canaan, and so facilitate the conquest of their country. On the side of Jordan, the kings of the neigh-

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end

(c) Gen. xv. 16. (d) Wisd. xii. 9, 10. (e) Eccles. viii. 11. (f) Vid. Lev. xviii. 4; Deut. ix. 4, etc., (g) Wisd. xii. 4, 5. (h) Deut. xx. 10, 11; Josh. xi. 19.

A. M. 2553, &c. Ant. Christ. 1451, &c. from Josh. i. to the end.

bourhood feared no invasion. The depth of the river (especially at the time of its overflowing, which was in the harvest, when the Israelites (*i*) passed it) was a barrier sufficient, they thought, against all that the Israelites could do. For in those days, pontoons were things never heard of in military expeditions; and the * stream is (even at this day) allowed to be too fierce and rapid for any one to swim over: And therefore, as they expected no danger from that quarter, and might for that reason draw out no forces to defend that side of their frontier; so the sacred historian has taken care to inform us, that (*k*) *when all the kings of the Amorites which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until they were passed over, their hearts melted, neither was there spirit in them any more.*

And as this miraculous passage could not but fill their enemies with confusion, so it added, no doubt, fresh courage to the Israelites, when they came to consider, that the same God, about 40 years before, had wrought the like miracle for them in their passage of the Red sea; that

(*i*) Josh. iii. 15.; 1 Chron. xii. 15.; and Ecclus. xxiv. 26.

* That the sacred writings do constantly represent this river as not fordable, except at some particular places, very probably made by art, that the countries on each side may have a freer communication, is plain from the passages to which these several citations, Josh. ii. 2.; Judg. iii. 28. and xii. 5.; 2 Kings ii. 14. do refer. That it was not a poor and inconsiderable stream, such as some have represented it, is evident from the account of Thevenot (in his travels, p. 193.) who himself went near the place where the Israelites passed over, and describes it to be "half as broad as the Seine at Paris, very deep, and very rapid;" which agrees very well with what Maundrell (in his journey from Aleppo, p. 83.) says of it, *viz.* "That its channel is twenty yards over, deeper than a man's height, and runs with such a current, that there is no swimming against it." And that (whatever the present condition of Jordan may be) it is certain, when the Israelites came into Canaan, it was a much larger river than now it is; for even in Pliny's time (Nat. Hist. lib. 5.) its channel was much larger than what it now runs in, having then the title of *Amnis ambitiosus*; and in the days when Strabo wrote, (according to his Geog. lib. 16.), even vessels of burden might navigate in it; Shuckford's Conn. tion, vol. iii. lib. 12.

(*k*) Josh. v. 1.

then

then he divided the waves, (*l*) to confirm the commission which he had given Moses, and now had parted the stream, to strengthen the authority of his successor Joshua, and to give them assurance, that (*m*) *he would be with the one, as he had been with the other*, and impower the latter to make good their possession of the land of promise, even as he had enabled the former to accomplish their deliverance out of the land of bondage.

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

In all rivers whatever, there questionless are some shallower places than ordinary, or some passages, either by boats or bridges, that may be called *fords*; but that the Jordan, at this time, was either so vastly overflown, as to render these fords impassable, or that the Israelites crossed it at places which the enemy never thought of, and where none of these passes were to be found, is pretty evident from the Canaanites making no preparation to defend their coasts on the river-side, and from the great consternation we find them in, when once they understood that the Jewish army had got over. For (whatever opinion we, at this distance of time, may have of the matter) they justly inferred, that the suspension of a river's course could be effected no other way than by a divine power, either immediately acting itself, or by the instrumentality of its angels. And though there possibly may be some instances in history, wherein, by the violence of adverse winds, the course of rivers has either been retarded, or * driven back; yet, as we read of no such wind concerned in this event, the prediction of Joshua, and the promises of God concerning this miracle, the time in which he chose to work it, and the analogy it bears with what before was wrought at the Red sea; these, and several other circumstances, make this transaction beyond compare, and rank it, not only among those prodigies which very rarely come to pass, but among those stupendous works, which (contrary to the laws of nature) the great author and ruler of the universe, for the

And that it
was really
miraculous.

(*l*) Saurin's Dissertation sur le passage du Jourdain.

(*m*) Josh. i. 17.

* Something of this nature seems to have happened in Augustus's time, according to that known passage in Horace:

Vidimus flavum Tiberim, retortis

Littore Etrusco violenta undis;

Ire dejectum monumenta regis,

Templaque Vestæ.

Lib. 1. Ode 2.

preservation

A. M. 2553, &c.
A. M. Christi.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

Why cir-
cumcision
might be
omitted.

preservation of his people, and the manifestation of his own glory, is sometimes observed to do.

(n) *He that is born in thy house, or he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised, and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant; and the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.* These are the words of the precept, and they seem to be so very urgent and express, that one would really think the ordinance was intended not only for a distinction between Jew and Gentile, but for an institution likewise, to take away the guilt of original sin. And yet, even upon this supposition, (o) the people's frequent moving from place to place, the uncertainty of their encampments, and the inconvenience of their travelling, which would make it dangerous for children to be circumcised before a march, might be some apology for their omitting the observation of this rite, even though they had no divine dispensation for it.

(p) It is one of the general rules among the Jews, that no precept, (always meaning no ceremonial precept, for some precepts there are that were to be observed, even at the expence of their lives), whose observation occasions death, is to be attended to, because the Scriptures say, that *he who observeth these laws shall live, not die, by them.* But how frivolous soever this reason may be, it is certain, that in case they apprehended any danger from the operation, they carried this dispensation so far, as to exempt the next child from having this ordinance pass upon him; if so be that his brother before him died of the wound which he received in circumcision. And for a farther excuse, they add, that during their sojourning in the wilderness, for one crime or other, their forefathers were generally under the divine displeasure, in which condition it would have been a profanation of the sacrament to have administered it.

But then, if the other notion of this ordinance be admitted, viz. that it was no more than a note of distinction between the Israelites and other nations, as the Israelites were now alone in the wilderness, there was no danger of their mixing with others, and consequently less reason for their observation of this distinguishing rite, until

(n) Gen. xvii. 13, 14. (o) Saurin's Dissert. sur la prise de Jerico. (p) Lightfoot's Hor. Heb. in 1 Cor. vii. 19.

they

they should enter upon the possession of a country where every kind of idolatry surrounded them on all hands. A. M. 2553, etc. Ant. Christ. 1451, etc. from Josh. i. to the end.

Thus, whether we look upon the rite of circumcision as a sacrament of initiation into the Jewish church, or a character of distinction only between them and other people, the Israelites might, without the imputation of much guilt, omit the outward observance of it, if so be that they did but attend to what was the true intent and meaning of it, viz. (q) *the circumcising the foreskin of their hearts*; (r) *for he is not a Jew* (as St. Paul excellently argues) *who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

In like manner, the observation of the Sabbath-day was a precept or severe injunction; but whether the destruction of Jericho happened on that day, or any other of the week, (as the Israelites were ordered to compass the city for seven days successively), it is certain, that one of these days must necessarily have been the Sabbath; and yet we must not suppose that they committed any great offence in what they did, because the same authority which made the law for the observation of it, gave now a full licence for the profanation of it. The person who met Joshua, and prescribed the form of the siege of Jericho, by his assumption of divine honours and appellations, was doubtless the same who delivered the law from Mount Sinai: And therefore we need not question but that now he acted in as full a power in suspending, (since his orders could not be executed without such suspension), as he then did in injoining the observation of the Sabbath; and it is in allusion (as some imagine) to this very passage, that our blessed Saviour pronounced that maxim in the gospel, (s) *the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.* And the Sabbath not observed.

However this be, it is certain, that before our Saviour's days, the Jews carried the observation of the Sabbath to a great degree of rigour. In the time of the Maccabees, they would not so much as defend themselves against the assault of their enemies on that day, (t) but yielded their throats to be cut, rather than stir an hand in their own vindication: Whereas this example of their forefathers

(q) Deut. x. 16. (r) Rom. ii. 28, 29, (s) Mark ii. 27, (t) Pridcaux's Connection, part 2. vol. 4.

A. M. investing, if not sacking, Jericho on the Sabbath-day, might
 2553, &c. have taught them, one would think, that in cases of this
 Ant. Chris. nature, it was allowable, not only to defend themselves,
 1451, &c. but to prevent their enemies annoying them, nay even to
 from Josh. i. fall upon and destroy them, whenever a favourable oppor-
 to the end. tunity presented itself on that day.

Why rams- In the conquest of Jericho however, some have imagin-
 horns were ed that rams-horns were not proper materials whereof to
 made use of make trumpets; that they are not so easily perforated, nor
 at the ta- can they ever be brought to make a sound shrill and
 king of Je- extensive enough for their particular purposes; and
 richo, therefore they conceive, that brass or silver, or any other
 metal had been more convenient for this use; whereupon
 (u) they derive the word *Jobel*, in the singular, (which we
 render *a ram's horn*), not from the Arabic, which signifies
a ram, but from *Jubal*, the name of him who was the first
 inventor of musical instruments: And according to this
 sense, the trumpets which the priests upon this occasion
 used, may be said to have been fashioned according to those
 which Jubal first invented.

This interpretation of the words (which is no bad one)
 removes all the incongruity that may seem to arise from
 the matter whereof these trumpets were composed: But
 then, it is to be considered, that as the first instruments of
 this kind were probably made of horns, so has the notion
 of the impossibility of boring a ram's horn been sufficiently
 confuted by our learned Spencer. The truth is, every one
 knows, that in the inside of it there is a softer part, which
 may be drawn out by art; after which it is hollow all the
 way up, except four or five inches towards the top, part of
 which is sawed off, to make it broad enough for the
 mouth, and then the rest is easily bored. But whether
 there is any foundation for that fancy of the Jews, that
 these horns were retained in the proclamation of some of
 their greatest festivals, in memory of Isaac's being rescued
 from his father Abraham's knife, by the substitution of a
 ram in his stead, is a point that we leave to the speculations
 of the curious.

Whatever materials these trumpets were made of, it is
 The taking impossible to conceive that there should be any power in their
 of it mira- found to demolish cities; and though the noise of a great
 culous. number of people might be very loud, yet still it would re-

(u) Masius in Josh. vi. 4.; Bochart's Hierof. lib. 2. c. 43.;
 and Calmet *in locum*.

quire

quire a miracle in Joshua to know what the just proportion was between their noise, and the strength of the walls of Jericho, since the least deviation in this respect would have defeated the whole experiment.

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

What the effect of gunpowder, or of other sulphureous matter fired under ground, or in the bowels of the earth, is, no one that has seen either the springing of a mine, or felt the convulsions of an earthquake, needs be told ; but that no stratagem of this kind could be employed in the siege of Jericho, is manifest, because the invention of gunpowder is a novel thing ; nor had the Israelites been long enough on the western side of Jordan, to have undermined its walls, even though they had had the secret of some inflammatory stratum, to have lodged under them. On the contrary, the whole process of this siege (if we may so call it) was managed at such a rate, as plainly discovered an expectation of a miracle to be wrought : For had not this been the case, instead of sauntering about the walls for seven days, they should have been working in their trenches, and carrying on their approaches, as we now call it.

The art of war was then but in its infancy ; and as the manner of undermining and blowing up the most ponderous bodies, was what the ancients were unacquainted with, so was the battering-ram an invention of a later date than some imagine. (x) Pliny indeed seems to say, that Epeus first made use of it at the siege of Troy ; but, in all probability, (y) Ezekiel is the earliest author that mentions this machine, and perhaps the first time that it was employed was under Nebuchadnezzar, at the siege of Jerusalem.

But there is no need to ransack history for the confutation of this system, which (z) they who propose it do nevertheless acknowledge, that though the walls of Jericho might have fallen without any extraordinary act of the divine power, yet by the circumstances of the whole account, it appears that this event was altogether miraculous. Nor should Joshua's denouncing an anathema over the vanquished city be thought a thing unprecedented, or a token of a furious and implacable spirit, since the like practice has been observed by some of the greatest generals of other

Joshua's
cursing it
no uncommon
thing.

(x) Lib. vii. c. 56.

(y) Ezek. iv. 1. 2. and xxi. 22.

(z) P. Merfenne, in his Comment. on Genesis, and D. Geo. Merhof. De Scypho vitreo per certum humanæ vocis tonum fracto.

A. M. nations ; forasmuch as (a) Agememnon, after he had
 2553, &c. taken Troy, denounced a curse upon those who should,
 Ant. Christ. at any time, attempt to rebuild it ; the Romans published
 1451, &c. a decree of execration against them who should do the like
 from Josh. i. to the end, to Carthage ; and when (b) Crassus had demolished Sidon,
 (which had been a lurking-place to the tyrant Glaucias), he
 wished the greatest evils imaginable upon the head of that
 man who should but so much as build a wall about the place
 where it once stood.

What the
 Urim and
 Thummim
 were .

Of all the questions in the Jewish schools, there is none
 more difficult than what we are to understand by the Urim
 and Thummim, which Moses takes notice of as something
 belonging to the attire of the high-priest, and withal en-
 abling him to give responses to such as, by his mediation,
 came to consult God. (c) The two words are variously
 translated ; but, in the main, all the translations amount
 much to the same purport ; and as this sacred thing (be it
 what it will) was to be placed on the high-priest's breast,
 it very properly reminded him of the great qualifications
 requisite in those of his order ; light, or sufficiency of spi-
 ritual knowledge ; and perfection, or the virtue and sanc-
 tity of his life.

The general opinion indeed is, that this Urim and
 Thummim were one and the same thing : But (d) an in-
 genious writer, of our own nation, conceives them to be
 two different oracles, and applied to different purposes ; that
 Urim was the oracle whereby God gave answer to those who
 consulted him in difficult cases, and Thummim, that where-
 by the high priest knew whether God did accept the sacri-
 fice or no ; that therefore the former is called *light*, as
 giving knowledge which dispels the darkness of our minds ;
 and the other *integrity*, or *perfection*, because they whose
 sacrifices God accepted, were accounted *Thummim*, i. e.
just and righteous in his sight : In short, that by the for-
 mer, the Jews were ascertained of the counsel or will of
 God ; by the latter, of his favour and good acceptance.
 But this distinction has not met with a general approba-
 tion, because, however there may be (e) passages where the
 one is mentioned without the other, yet in this case, the

(a) Strabo, lib. 13. p. 898. (b) Zonaræ Annal. lib. 9. p.
 409. (c) Edward's Inquiry into difficult texts, part 2.
 (d) Mede's Discourse 35. (e) Numb. xxvii. 21. 1 Sam.
 xxviii. 6.

one (which is generally the Urim) may well enough be supposed to include both..

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

The Jewish doctors are mostly of opinion, that the Urim and Thummim were nothing else but the precious stones which were set upon the breast-plate; and that (f) by the shining or protuberating of the letters in the names of the twelve tribes, engraven upon the twelve stones, the high-priest, when he came to consult God, could read the answer: But in this opinion there are some difficulties hardly to be surmounted. For besides that all the letters in the Hebrew alphabet are not to be found on the pectoral, since there are four, viz: Heth, Teth, Zade, and Koph, manifestly wanting; (g) the question is, by what rules the high-priest could make a combination of these letters, (supposing there were enough of them), and so put them together, as to spell out the divine oracle; because it is not pretended that these letters moved out of their places, but only swelled, or raised themselves above the rest? Suppose, for instance, that any six of these letters should have swelled, or shone with a more than ordinary lustre, yet how should the high-priest know to dispose of them in right order, and which should be first, and which last? If it be said by the spirit of prophecy; this vacates all the necessity of the Urim and Thummim; because a prophetic spirit would teach him what he desired to know, without any farther assistance.

(h) *Christophorus a Castro*, and from him, (i) Dr. Spencer will needs have it, that this Urim and Thummim were two little images, (much of the same make with the Gentile Teraphim), which being folded in the doubling of the breast-plate, did from thence give oracular answers by an audible voice, and that this device was taken from the Egyptians. But besides that the word Teraphim (to which these others were compared) is seldom or never taken in a good sense, it seems a little improbable, that in a matter so solemn and sacred, the Jews should be left to follow the examples of the idolatrous Egyptians. (k) The sacred records indeed inform us, that the Jews borrowed of the Egyptians *jewels of silver, and gold, and raiment*; but they no where intimate, that the Jewish high-priest borrowed his pontifical, and particularly his oracular

(f) *Prideaux's Connection*, part ii. lib. 3. (g) *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Urim*. (h) *De Vaticinio*. (i) *Dissert. De Urim et Thummim*. (k) *Edward's Inquiry*, part ii. habit,

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

habit, from them : and therefore to think that God, who declares himself so positively against the idolatrous practice of the Gentiles, should, by these images of Pagan invention, take the ready way to give them countenance and encouragement ; or to think, that the Jews, who were expressly commanded not to *learn the way of the Heathen*, and, *(l) after the doings of the land of Egypt, where they had dwelt, not to do* ; were permitted, nay, commanded to make use of this magical and superstitious rite, is such an heap of odd and wild conceits, as no unprejudiced mind can ever entertain.

Others therefore are of opinion, that it was the tetragrammaton, or ineffable name of God ; and others, that it was no more than the two plain words of Urim and Thummim, written or engraven on some plate of gold or precious stones, which, when placed upon the pectoral, would give it an oracular power : *(m)* But the most probable opinion, is, that it was no corporeal thing at all, but only a certain virtue (which God was pleased to give to the breast-plate at its consecration) of obtaining an oracular answer from him, whenever the high-priest should put it on in order to ask counsel of him, in the manner that he had appointed ; and that the names of Urim and Thummim were given it, only to denote the clearness and perspicuity which those answers of God had, *viz.* that they were not like the heathen oracles, enigmatical and ambiguous, but plain and manifest, and such as never fell short of perfection, either in the fulness of the answer, or the certainty of the truth of it.

Upon what
occasions
consulted.

Whether this oracle was only consulted in the great and important affairs of the state, or might be advised with in questions of a low nature, is not entirely determined by the learned ; but the most prevailing opinion is, that the high-priest (who was not the only officiating minister in this ceremony) was not allowed to address it for any private person, but only for the king, the president of the Sanhedrim, the general of the army, or some other public governour in Israel ; and that, not upon any private affairs, but such only as related to the public interest of the nation, whether in church or state.

The man-
ner of de-
ing it.

When therefore any such matter happened, wherein it was necessary to consult God, the custom was for the

(l) Levit. xviii. 3. *(m)* Prideaux's Connection, part i. lib. 3.

high-

high-priest to put on his robes and breast-plate, and so present himself, not within the veil of the Holy of Holies, (for thither he never entered but once a-year, on the great day of expiation), but without the veil in the holy place, and there standing, with his face directly towards the ark, or mercy-seat, whereon the divine presence rested, he propounded the matter; and at some distance behind him, but without the holy place, stood the person for whom the oracle was consulted, in devout expectation of the answer, which (as (n) it seems most congruous to the thing) was given him in an audible voice from the mercy-seat, which was within behind the veil.

Here it was that Moses went to ask counsel of God in all cases; and from hence he was answered in an audible voice: and, in like manner, when ever the high-priest presented himself before God, according to the prescription of the divine law, it is reasonable to believe, that God gave him an answer in the same way that he did Moses, *i. e.* by an audible voice from the mercy-seat: and for this reason it is, that such address for counsel is called *inquiring at the mouth of God*, and the *Holy of Holies* (the place where the mercy-seat stood, and from which the answer was given) is so often in Scripture styled, (o) *the oracle*; because from thence were the oracles of God delivered to such as came to ask counsel of him.

* Such was the standing oracle which the Israelites might have had recourse to upon all important occasions; and if, in their league with the Gibeonites, they were too hasty and precipitate, their unadvisedness is only to be blamed, and not the insufficiency of that means, which God had appointed for their better information. The short of the matter is, the pretended foreign ambassadors drew them

A. M.
2553, etc
Ant. Ch. 11.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

Why the Israelites were outwitted notwithstanding they had this oracle.

(n) Prideaux's Connection, part i. lib 3. (o) Exod. xxv. 18, 20. chap. xxvii. 6. Lev. xvi. 2. 1 Kings vi. 5, etc. 2 Chron. iii. 16. chap. iv. 20, etc. Psal. xxviii. 2.

* The Jewish doctors think, that the custom of consulting God by Urim and Thummim, continued no longer than under the tabernacle: For it is a maxim among them, that the Holy Spirit spake to the children of Israel by Urim and Thummim, while the tabernacle lasted; under the first temple, *i. e.* the temple of Solomon, by the prophets; and under the second temple, or after the captivity of Babylon, by the Bath-col, or *daughter of the voice*, by which they mean a voice sent from heaven,

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

them in by a wife and artifice. The story of their old shoes and mouldy bread was so well contrived, and seemed so very plausible, that they took the thing for granted, as we say. (*p*) *They took of their viſtuals*, (as the text expreſſes it), or received them without any farther inquiry, upon the account of the ſtalenefs of their proviſion, and (*q*) *asked not counſel of the mouth of the Lord*; and therefore no wonder that God ſhould ſuffer them to be outwitted, when they had an infallible director ſo near at hand; and yet in a matter of ſuch moment as that of entering into a national treaty, never once beſought themſelves to conſult him.

But there was a greater error in their conduct, with relation to the Gibeonites. The orders and directions which God gave them, when they entered into a ſtate of war, were to this effect. — (*r*) That to all cities, which upon their ſummons ſurrendered to them, they were to give quarter; to ſave their lives, but at the ſame time to make them their ſlaves and tributaries; but that to ſuch as ſlighted their ſummons, and ſtood upon their defence, they were not to uſe the ſame treatment. If they were a diſtant nation, or not belonging to the country of Canaan, upon their taking any place, they were to put the men only to the ſword, ſparing the women and children, and other living creatures that were found in it; but if they were a neighbouring or Canaanitiſh ſtate, that ſtood out and reſiſted, they were to deſtroy all without exception; and ſave

heaven, ſuch as was heard at our Saviour's baptiſm and tranſfiguration, Matth. iii. 17. Our learned Spencer ſeems to have adopted this opinion, and endeavours to ſupport it by theſe arguments, *viz.* That the Urim and Thummim were a conſequence of the theocracy of the Hebrews: For while the Lord immediately governed his people, it was neceſſary, that there ſhould always be a means at hand, whereby to conſult him upon affairs that concerned the common intereſt of the whole nation; but ſince the theocracy ceaſed, when the kingdom became hereditary in the perſon and family of Solomon, and the intereſt of the nation ceaſed to be common, after the diviſion of Iſrael into two monarchies, the oracles of the Urim and Thummim muſt neceſſarily ceaſe. And accordingly if we conſult the ſacred hiſtory, we ſhall meet with no footſteps of thus applying to God, from the building of Solomon's temple, to the time of its deſtruction; and after its deſtruction, all are agreed, that this oracle was never reſtored again; *Spencer De Urim et Thummim, cap. ii.*

(*p*) Josh. ix. 14. (*q*) Ibid. (*r*) Deut. xx. 12, &c.

alive

alive nothing that breathed. In the whole, however, there was this injunction, that of what country soever the people were, and whether they resisted, or resisted not, the Israelites were to make no (s) *covenant with them, nor with their gods*; and the reason hereof is this, ——— (t) That as a league between two nations implies, in the very notion of it, their having upon some terms given their faith to each other, to observe punctually what had been stipulated between them; and, as when such public faith was given and taken, the parties to the treaty swore solemnly to each other, by their respective gods; the Israelites, who looked upon the gods of these nations as vanity and nothing, who were obliged to (u) *overthrow their altars, burn their groves, hew down their images*, and utterly extirpate their religion, were totally debarred from entering into any treaty or alliance with them, because they could not recognize their idols as gods, nor take any public faith from the worshippers of them. For so the people seem to say to the Gibeonites, at their first coming into the camp to propose a treaty, *peradventure you dwell among us* “are some of those neighbouring nations, whom we are ordered to destroy, whose gods we are to drive out, and whose country we are come to take possession of,” *and how shall we make a league with you?* “The interdiction we are under will not permit us; and therefore, if you pretend to impose upon us in this matter, the covenant of course is null and invalid; and so in reality it was.”

It is reasonable, however, to imagine, that after the fraud of the Gibeonites was discovered, the princes of Israel might reflect upon their neglect, in not consulting the divine oracle before; and as the peace which they had entered into, was plainly repugnant to God's command of exterminating all the Canaanites, the question was, what they should do in this case? whether abide by the treaty, and so postpone the command; or execute the command, and so disannul the treaty? The whole stress of the question turns upon this ——— (x) Whether God commanded the Israelites to destroy all the people of Canaan absolutely, and without exception; or whether he allowed them to spare such as voluntarily submitted themselves, and came to im-

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

And why
they abode
by their
treaty with
the Gibeon-
ites.

(s) Exod. xxiii. 32. (t) Shuckford's Connection, vol. iii. lib. 12. (u) Deut. xii. 3. (x) Puffendorf, De jure gent. lib. iv. cap. ii. sect. 7. De juramentis, &c.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

plore their pity and protection? The words of the injunction in this case are full, and express enough: (y) *When thou goest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it, and if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then shall all the people that are found therein be tributaries to thee, and shall serve thee.* — Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, and which are not of these Canaanitish nations. But of the cities of these people which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth; but shalt utterly destroy them, that they teach thee not to do all their abominations, which they have done to their gods. But here some great writers have observed, that this utter extinction of the Canaanitish nations, considering the reasons that are given for it, both here and (z) elsewhere, is to be looked upon (a) as a permission, rather than a positive command, and should at least, (b) be understood with this limitation; *unless they immediately submitted, renounced their idolatry, and did every thing that was enjoined them.* And to this purpose (c) the Jews have a tradition, that Joshua, before he declared war against the seven nations, wrote letters to them, wherein he offered them three conditions — That if they were minded to depart, they should quit the country immediately; if they were desirous to make peace, they should come and treat with the Israelites; but that if they intended to fight it out, they might betake themselves to their arms: and they farther add, that the first of these conditions the Girgashites embraced, and fled into Egypt; the second the Gibeonites accepted, and made a league with Joshua; and the third the confederate kings made their choice, when they took up arms against the Israelites and were all defeated.

But this is no more than a bare hypothesis, invented on purpose to solve the difficulty, and seems not to have near so good a foundation, as that which supposes that the princes of Israel, remembering their former omission, and their insecurity in acting upon their own bottom, might, in this perplexity, have recourse to God for advice, and that his answer might be, *that the league should be ratified.* Of this indeed we have no express mention in Scripture;

- (y) Deut. xx. 10, &c. (z) Exod. xxiii. 23. and Deut. vii. 4.
(a) Puffendorf, Ibid. (b) Grotius, De jure belli, lib. ii. cap. 13.
(c) Saurin's Dissert. sur l'artifice des Gabaonites, vol. iii.

but

but in so short an history of such a variety of transactions, as that of Joshua is, we may well imagine, that several circumstances may be omitted. For that some such ratification of this treaty was determined by God, we have great presumption to believe, (d) from the severe punishment which he afterwards inflicted upon the Israelites, and the posterity of Saul, for his having slain some of the descendants of these Gibeonites, (not improbably (e) at the sacking of the town of Nob). For though this action of Saul's was cruel, and inhuman, because the decree for the extirpation of the Canaanites was now extinct; yet what made it more heinous and provoking to God, was the infraction of the treaty, which had subsisted about four ages, and which cost the lives of seven of that bloody prince's sons and grandsons to atone.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

The Heathens, it must be owned, had no small respect and veneration for oaths: Whenever they took one, it was in the most solemn and religious manner. (f) They looked upon the gods as inspectors and witnesses of what they said; more especially at such a time as this. They believed that the Furies were appointed to be avengers of all perjury; and that as (g) disgrace attended it in this world, so destruction would pursue it in the next. And as this was the general notion of most heathen nations, so the Gibeonites, who had hitherto conceived a good opinion of the God of Israel, would have been strangely scandalised, † had they found his people prevaricating with their oaths, even though they were made upon a false supposition. For fear, therefore, lest any dishonour should fall ultimately upon that divine Majesty whose servants they were, the princes of the congregation unanimously agree, (and there seems to be something of a divine inspiration in this their unanimity), and declare it as their joint opinion, (h) *We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel*, and therefore, without

(d) 2 Sam. xxi. 1, etc. (e) 1 Sam. xxii. 19. (f) Vid. Hesiod. Dies, ver. 38. etc. (g) Perjurii pœna divina exitium, humana dedecus; *Cic. De leg. lib. 2.*

† St. Ambrose, treating of this story, speaks of it in this manner: — “Joshua did not think fit to break the peace, which he had granted, because it was confirmed by the awful solemnity of an oath, lest, whilst he was blaming the perfidiousness of others, he himself should be worse than his word, and forfeit his own honour;” *De officiis, lib. iii. cap. 10.*

(h) Josh. ix. 19.

A. M.
2553, etc.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

Why the
Israelites
took of-
fence at
their bre-
thren.

breaking our oath, or forfeiting his favour, *we may not touch them.*

I was the same commendable zeal for the honour of God, that made the Israelites on one side of Jordan, conceive such angry resentments against their brethren on the other, upon suspicion that they had apostatised from his worship into the idolatry of the nations that were round about them. The two tribes and an half, upon their return from the wars, erected an altar, in memory of their relation to the tribes and tabernacle which they had left behind them (i). This altar, it seems was of an height somewhat extraordinary; and as it was the custom for Heathens to worship their gods (which were generally celestial bodies) upon high-places, as presuming that thereby they made nearer approaches to them; their brethren on the west side of the river, conjectured from thence that this was an altar raised for the worship of the sun, or some other planetary god. But if even they were mistaken in that conjecture, sufficient reason they had to suspect, that it was intended for no good purpose, since God had expressly forbidden them to offer their sacrifices at any other place but the tabernacle, or upon any other altar but that which was built by his appointment: For these are directions which Moses gives them: (k) *Ye are not yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you: But when you shall be put in possession of it, ye shall not do after all these things, that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes; but in the place which the Lord shall chuse, in one of thy tribes, there shalt thou offer thy burnt-offerings; thither shalt thou come, and there shalt thou do all that I command thee.*

Now when they had sufficient reason, as they thought, to suspect their brethren of a defection into idolatry, what should they do? Why, herein they punctually follow the rules which God himself had prescribed them in such a case: (l) *If thou shalt hear say, in one of thy cities which the Lord thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go, and serve other gods, (which ye have not known), then shalt thou inquire, and make search, and ask*

(i) Saurin's Dissert. Josue renvoie les Reub. (k) Deut. xii. 9, 8, 14. (l) Deut. xiii. 12, 13, etc.

diligently; and behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, ^{A. M. 2553, &c. Ant. Christ. 1451, &c. from Josh. i. to the end.} that such abomination is wrought among you, thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword; destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword; and thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for the Lord thy God; and it shall be an heap for ever, it shall not be built again. And if the Israelites on the west of Jordan, having this cause of suspicion, pursued these orders to a tittle, who shall say that they did amiss, or that their zeal for God's glory was rash and precipitate? They took the properest method (which was sending an embassy) for the discovery of the truth; and if, upon inquiry, their fears were found to be groundless, yet it seems to be an error on the better side, (as we commonly say), and an instance of no contemptible prudence, in matters of so dangerous a consequence, always to suspect the worst.

It may be doubted perhaps, whether the Israelites were ^{Why they were sometimes ejected.} a people of the greatest bravery in the world, but it may truly be said, that there was no necessity for their being so; because, upon all occasions, they had the Lord of Hosts to protect them, and to fight their battles for them. Supported by his aid, (m) *how did one of them chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?* But when this was the case, no wonder at all, that (n) *the hearts of the people melted away, and became like water.*

The short of the story was this:—They had all along hitherto been victorious; had subdued a country beyond Jordan; passed that river, and conquered the capital of the adjacent province by miracle: And now having sent out a party to summons a small place to surrender, upon the first sally that the inhabitants make, they are all on a sudden seized with a panic, forget their courage, and flee, without so much as striking a stroke. This they could not but perceive was the effect of God's displeasure; and therefore, considering themselves in an enemy's country, they had just reason to dread, that if God should desert them in this situation of their affairs, the people of the land, hearing the report of their defeat, would come, and (as Joshua

(m) Chap. xxxii. 30.

(n) Josh. vii. 5.

A. M. 2553, &c. Ant. Chrif. 1451, &c. from Jofh. i. to the end.

exprefles it) (o) *environ them round, and cut off their name from the earth.*

Good reason therefore had the Ifraelites to be difconfolate, when they found that God, to whom they owed all their valour and victories, had forfaken them. • But in the mean time, how did they behave upon this occafion? Why, *they fell to the earth upon their knees*, in humble fupplication to God for mercy; they continued all the day long in fafting and praying, and expreffed their sorrow, and the fenfe of their unworthinefs with the ufual tokens of grief. And was not this better, than to become obdurate under God's afflicting hand, as were the Egyptians? Nay, was not this their very behaviour by which the Ninevites moved the divine mercy to reverse the fentence of excifion, that had gone out againft them? So that, all things confidered, the Ifraelites, in this regard, are not to blamed: fince they who had loft the *rock of their might*, and had *the terrors of the Lord fet in array againft them*, were far from fearing where no fear was.

And, in like manner, if to the reafons we have already alledged for their conduct at Jericho, we add this one confideration, *viz.* that they were juft now entering upon their conquests; that this was the firft city they had taken on the weft fide of Jordan; and that the people they had to contend with, were to be terrified into fubmiffion, rather than intreated, we cannot but be of this opinion, that an example or two of high feverity, at the firft fetting out, was no lefs than neceffary to reduce the country more fpeedily, and with a lefs effufion of blood; as well as to verify the promife of him who appointed them: (p) *This day will I begin to put the dread of thee, and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who fhall hear report of thee, and fhall tremble, and be in anguifh becaufe of thee.*

Without entering therefore into any farther vindication of the Jewish nation, we may fafely fay, that in the cafes we have had under confideration, they were neither zealous, nor timorous, nor cruel, without a caufe; that in the firft of thefe cafes, they expreffed their concern for God's honour; in the fecond, their dread of his departing from them; and, in the third, their obedience to his command.

(o) Jofh. vii. 9.

(p) Deut. ii. 25.

It is a law of God's own enacting, that (q) *the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers, but every man shall be put to death for his own sin*: But then we are to consider, that this law was given to man, and not to God, who has certainly a more absolute right and sovereignty over men, than one man has over another. That as the Israelites, at this time, lived under a theocracy, and in a proper sense had God for their civil governour, every wilful transgression, (such as Achan's was) must have been deemed not only a violation of the divine command, but a crime of lese majesty likewise; and that in crimes of this kind, the practice of all * governments, ancient as well as modern, has been, to make children suffer for the iniquity of the parent, (as in cases of attain of blood, and confiscation of estate), and that with the reputation of the highest equity. Upon the supposition then that Achan's family were not accessory to their father's crime, yet God, who gave them life, had undoubtedly a full power to take it away, at what time, or in what manner he thought fit; and if, in cases of high-treason among men, it is thought reasonable to devolve some of the parent's penalty upon the children, there is this farther argument why Achan's family should be made to suffer with him, because God could not express his severity against sin, nor take their lives away, at a more convenient opportunity, than in the beginning of a new empire, and when each man's right and property was going to be settled; that such a dreadful example of his indignation against stealth might deter others, if not for their own, at least for their dear children's sake, to abstain from such dangerous and pernicious practices. (r) The Jews have a maxim, "That he who is an accomplice in any crime, is as culpable as the person who commits it;" and therefore if we suppose that Achan's

A. M. 2553, &c. Ant. Christ. 1451, &c. from Josh. i. to the end. The case of Achan's children inquired into.

(q) Deut. xxiv. 16.

* Thus Cicero, to excuse the confiscations decreed against Lepidus, which affected his children, the nephews of Brutus, has these words:—*Neque vero me fugit, quam sit acerbum, parentum scelera filiorum poenis lui: Sed hoc præclare legibus comparatum est, ut charitas liberorum amiciores parentes reipublicæ redderet*; Ad Brutum, liber 1. epist. 12. And again, — *In qua videtur esse crudele, quod ad liberos, qui nihil meruerunt, poena pervenit*; sed et id antiquum est, et omnium civitatum; Ep. 15.; Warburton's *Divine Legation*, vol. iii. lib 5.

(r) Saurin's *Dissert. sur le crime etc. de Achen*.

family

A. M. family was privy to what their father had done, and did
 2553, &c. conceal it, there could be no injustice in including them in
 Ant. Christ. the punishment. It may be pretended perhaps, that some
 1451, &c. of them were infants; and so must be deemed innocent;
 from Josh. i. to the end. but the text says nothing of this: it only calls them (s) *sons*
 and *daughters*; and considering that Achan, in all proba-
 bility, was an old man, (t) as being the fifth descendent
 from Judah, it seems most likely, that his children (u) were
 grown up, and so capable of knowing, and of either con-
 cealing or discovering the fact.

But, after all, there is no occasion for our running our-
 selves into any difficulty. The text does not say, neither is
 it any way implied, that Achan's sons and daughters were
 executed with him. In the sentence denounced against
 him, we find no mention made of them, and why then
 should we suppose, that they were partakers in his pu-
 nishment, any other ways than as they were brought out
 to be spectators of it? And a piercing sight no doubt it
 was, for persons so nearly related to behold the sad fate
 of their chief, first stoned to death, and then, with all
 his goods and chattels, as well as those accursed things
 for which he was condemned, committed to the flames.
 His oxen, and asses, and sheep, are here taken notice of,
 to let us see that Achan was a wealthy man, and therefore
 inexcusable in committing this fact. And though they
 were not capable of sin, nor consequently of punishment
 properly so called; yet as they were made for man's use,
 they might fairly die for his instruction, viz. to convince
 him of the sad and contagious nature of sin, which even
 involves innocent creatures in its plagues; and emblematically
 to shew him, how much sorer punishments are reserved
 for man, who having a law given for the conduct of
 his life, and the gifts of reason and will to restrain him
 from the transgression of it, will adventure upon things
 forbidden, and thereby contract greater guilt, and draw
 upon himself severer expressions of the divine wrath.

The strata-
 gem against
 Ai, Joshua's
 own.

God indeed styles himself *The Lord of Hosts*, and had
 so immediate an hand in the conduct of Israel, that e-
 very military achievement of theirs might very properly be
 ascribed to him: But when he ordered Joshua (x) to go
 up against Ai, and to lay an ambuscade behind it, he might

(s) Josh. vii. 24.
 tations.

(t) Ibid. ver. 1.
 (x) Josh. viii. 2.

(u) Pool's Anno-
 notwithstanding

notwithstanding this, leave the whole glory of the invention and execution of it to him, as an able and expert general; for if he had always wrought miracles in favour of his people, and left nothing for Joshua to perform, we cannot see how he could have merited the character of an extraordinary man.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Chriſt.
1451, &c.
from Joſh. i.
to the end.

In other events, where the whole may be ſaid to be under the guidance of God, he takes care to direct every particular of the tranſaction. In paſſing the river Jordan, and ſurrounding the walls of Jericho, he preſcribes the form and order of the people's march, and how, upon every occaſion, they were to behave; but here, in the affair of Ai, he contents himſelf with merely ſuggeſting the means, as things that Joshua was no ſtranger to, and leaves to him the contrivance and application of them. This ſtratagem indeed is the firſt that we find any mention of in Scripture; but we muſt not from thence infer, that there was never any before put in execution. The art of war began very ſoon, and was carried on, no doubt, with great application. The whole excellence of its management conſiſts in circumventing and doubling upon the enemy with dexterity; and therefore no queſtion but that the wits of mankind were always employed in taking the advantage of each other, and in gaining a victory with the leaſt expence of blood on their own ſide. (y) The Romans fell frequently into the ſnares which were laid for them, becauſe their generals were men of no military ſkill; and therefore to excuſe their ignorance, they alledged that they made war like honeſt men, without deceit or artifice: And if Alexander diſclaimed the uſe of ſtratagems, it was becauſe he knew the cowardice of his enemies, and how eaſy a matter it was to gain a conqueſt in a fair and open field. For it is not to be doubted, but that had he been to attack any other nation, except the effeminate Perſians, he would have taken his friend Parmenio's advice, and (without bluſhing at a victory obtained by good management) fallen upon his enemy under the cover of the night.

However this be, that ſtratagems are lawful in war we have good preſumption to think from God's directing Joshua to make uſe of one; and though he does not (as other warriors do) employ any of theſe at a pinch, or becauſe he cannot accompliſh his deſigns without them; though he

(y) Calmet's Dictionary, under the word *Ai*.
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A. M. 2553, etc. Ant. Chris. 1451, &c. from Josh. i. to the end. could, with one single act of his will, have destroyed the city of Ai, and all the inhabitants thereof, and without suffering his people to strike one blow, have put them in possession of the promised land; yet chusing to act by secondary means, he proceeded in the ordinary way, and leaving a good deal to Joshua's skill and management, assisted him only at some critical conjunctures, that by a prolongation of the war, the reputation of his people might be raised, and more frequent opportunities occur for the display of his miraculous works.

Why God gave not the Israelites the possession of all Canaan.

(z) Josephus indeed seems not to have consulted the honour of Joshua much, when he ascribes the delay of the conquest of Canaan to the weakness of his army, and the impregnable strength of the places he was to attack: But (a) some other Jews make the matter much worse, when they tell us, that he desired to prolong the war, not only to retain the office and dignity of being captain-general, but because he was informed by the oracle, that as soon as the conquest was finished, he himself was to die. God however seems to have given us much better reasons for this retardation, when he acquaints Moses with his intention; (b) *I will not drive the Canaanites out from before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee*; and when he complains of their sad defection after the death of Joshua, (c) *I will not henceforth drive out any from before them, of the nations which Joshua left when he died, that through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or no*: Whereupon the historian tells us, that God accordingly *did leave these nations without driving them out*; and adds another reason for their continuance in the country, viz. that the Israelites by having an enemy to contend with, might be trained up in the art and mystery of war: For (d) *these are the nations, says he, which the Lord left to prove Israel, that by them they might teach those war, who before knew nothing of it*.

So that here are three reasons given us, why God delayed the entire subjection of Canaan, viz. because the children of Israel were as yet too few in number to replenish the whole country; because God, by keeping the

(z) Antiq. lib. v. c. 1. (a) Vid. Schotan Biblioth. Vet. et Nov. Test. vol. ii. p. 402. (b) Exod. xxiii. 29, 30. (c) Judg. ii. 21, 22. (d) Judg. iii. 1, 2.

Canaanites in being, was willing both to make trial of his people's obedience, and to train them and their posterity, for some ages, up in military discipline and exercise.

A. M.
2553, etc.
An. Chrif.
1451, etc.
from Jofh. i.
to the end.

But there is another reason which Joshua, in his dying speech, assigns for their not enlarging their conquests to the utmost bounds which God had given them: (e) *Take good heed therefore, fays he, unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God; else if you do in any wife go back, and cleave unto the remnants of these nations, even these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you; know for a certainty, that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you.*

So that the promise which God made to the Israelites was conditional; and as they manifestly falsified their part of the obligation, by engaging first in affinity, and then in idolatry with the nations, which they were bound to destroy; so God might very well think himself released from his, and under no farther concern for their success, or the enlargement of their conquest; (f) but as they had been the ministers of his vengeance, in punishing the disorders of the Canaanites, they, in their turn, were now made the instruments of his chastising the disobedience of his own people: (g) *They shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from the good land which the Lord your God hath given you.*

And indeed, if we consider how violently, in after ages, the Israelites were oppressed by their enemies, and by many battles and captivities, harrassed and diminished in their numbers, we shall find no necessity of enlarging their possessions; because the country which they conquered in the first six years, was spacious enough to contain them (b) The promise however, which God made, was sufficiently accomplished in the reigns of David and Solomon, when the kingdom of Israel was in its zenith; and though its territories did not extend to the Euphrates, yet its dominion did, since all that tract of land between Jerusalem and that great river was either subdued, or made tributary to them.

(e) Jofh. xxiii. 11. etc. (f) Saurin's Dissert. vol. iii. dissert. 10. (g) Jofh. xxiii. 13. (b) Pool's Annotations.

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

Upon the whole therefore it is evident, that the author of the book of Joshua, (be he who he will), in the three instances which we have been considering, has left no imputation upon God; forasmuch as though he commanded Achan to be put to death, yet it does not appear that his children suffered with him; or if they did, there is presumption to believe that they were accomplices in his crime: Though he ordered the taking of Ai by a stratagem, yet the whole form and contrivance of it he left to the general; and though the Israelites did not actually possess all that he had promised them, yet this was occasioned by their own disobedience and cowardice, and the falsification of those conditions, upon which the full conquest of the land of Canaan was suspended.

How the
ark may be
said to have
been at this
time at
Shechem.

There is but one objection more, in the course of this period, which is usually alledged against the sacred history, and that is, the seeming contradiction of the ark's being said to be at Shechem, when it was, in reality, at Shiloh: But in answer to this, some have imagined, that as Joshua was now grown old and infirm, the ark (*i*) upon this occasion, was removed from Shiloh, the settled place of the divine residence, to Shechem, the place of Joshua's habitation, that he might with greater solemnity, and in the presence of God, (whereof the ark was the proper emblem), deliver his charge to the people. But other learned men have observed, that (*k*) *by the sanctuary of the Lord*, we are to understand, not the *ark of the covenant*, but only some certain place of religious worship, such, very probably, as the Jewish oratories were. That the holy ark was not, on this occasion, set up here at Shechem, is evident, they say, from that prohibition given by God, (*l*) *Thou shalt not plant a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the Lord thy God, which thou shalt make thee, neither shalt thou set up a pillar, which the Lord thy God hateth*: Whereas in this sanctuary, we read both of an oak planted, and a pillar or statue erected under it; which is certainly such a violation of the divine command, as Joshua, upon no occasion, can be supposed capable of incurring. (*m*) It is a very probable opinion therefore, that the place where Joshua set up his monumental pillar, was one of those which the tribe of Ephraim (to whom Shechem belonged) had consecrated, and set apart for a pro-

(*i*) Pool's Annot. and Patrick's Com. (*k*) Josh. xxiv. 26.

(*l*) Deut. xvi. 21, 22. (*m*) Mede's Dif. 8.

Seucha, or a place to assemble in for public prayer; and that they made choice of this rather than any other, to perform their devotions in, because it was that particular spot where God appeared to Abraham, and promised his posterity the possession of the land of Canaan. A. M. 2553, &c. Ant. Christ. 1451, &c. from Josh. i. to the end.

* That there were such oratories, or places of public prayer among the Jews, and that they were generally beset,

* Epiphanius, who was a Jew bred, and born in Palestine, speaking of some heretics, (lib. 1. hæres. 61.), whom he calls *Massilians*; and who, according to his account, were neither Jews, Christians, nor Samaritans, but Pagans, tells us, that they nevertheless pretended to worship the one true God, and for that purpose had certain open places, which they called *proseucha*. And that the Jews (as also the Samaritans) had places for religious worship of the same denomination, he proves from the Acts of the apostles, (chap. xvi. 12.) where Lydia is said to have met St. Paul, and to have heard him preach in that place, which ἐδόκει τόπος προσευχῆ εἶναι, *seemed to be a place of prayer*. There is also at Shechem, (which is now called *Neapolis*), continues he, about a mile without the city, a *proseucha*, a place of prayer, like a theatre, which was built in the open air, and without a roof, by the Samaritans, who affected to imitate the Jews in all things. Juvenal, in his third satire, describing the manner in which some wild young fellows were wont, in their drunken frolics, to affront and abuse every poor man they met in the streets in the night-time, brings them in speaking thus :

Ede, ubi consistas, in qua te quæro *proseucha* ? Sat. 3.

Whereby he either intimates, that he was some poor wretch, who dwelt in an house that could not keep out wind and weather, but, like the Jewish *proseucha*, was all open above; or he alludes to the state of the Jews at that time, who were banished out of Rome by Domitian, and had no place of shelter, but their oratories, which were without the walls of the city. For, that the Jews had their *proseuchæ* about the city of Rome, is evident from that passage in Philo, (De legatione ad Caium), wherein he commends the clemency and moderation of Julius Cæsar, who knew that the Jews had such places of public worship, where they always assembled on the Sabbath-day, and yet gave them no molestation, as Caius had done. Josephus (in his life, sect. 54.) makes mention of a *proseucha* at Tiberias in Gallilee, and, in several places in the New Testament, the same term is made use of in the same signification; *Vid.* Mede's Discourse 18. But then the question is, whether it be not a mistake in some learned men, to apply an usage, that is mentioned at such and such a time, to a people who lived many ages before.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

beset, or shaded with trees, is evident from such a variety of testimonies, that it can hardly be contested; but whether they were of so early a date as Joshua's time, or not rather introduced after the captivity of Babylon, is a question not easy to determine. In the main, however, we may conclude, that whether the ark of the covenant was occasionally brought to Shechem, or at Shechem there happened to be such an oratory, as in after-ages became frequent in Judea, there can be no incongruity in the sacred penman's saying, that the sanctuary of the Lord (since either the ark, or the oratory, might merit that name) was at Shechem. There is another solution, however, of this difficulty, which ought not to be disregarded †. Shechem and Shiloh were about twelve miles distant from each other, and in the mid-way between them, was Tinnah-Serah, the place where Joshua lived. Since therefore the text informs us, that (*n*) *he gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for their Elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and they presented themselves before God*; we may reasonably suppose, that though all the people met at Shechem, yet their elders and chief officers

Philo Judæus, (De legat. ad Caium,) speaking of the barbarous outrage of some Gentiles, against the Jews dwelling then at Alexandria, acquaints us, "That of some of their *proseucha* they cut down the trees, and others they demolished to the very foundations." The poet Juvenal alludes to the very same custom of having trees planted where the Jewish oratories were, when, speaking of a fortune-teller of that nation, he thus describes her:

Arcanum Judæa tremens mendicat in aurem,

Interpres legum Solymarum, magna sacerdos

Arboris, et summi fida internuncia coeli.

Sat. 6.

And, in another place, complaining, that through the corruption of the times, the once sacred grove of Capena, which had formerly been the habitation of the muses, and the place where Numa was wont to meet the goddess Ægeria, was now let out to the beggarly Jews for a *proseucha*, his expressions are these:

Hic, ubi nocturnæ Numa constitnebat amicæ,

Nunc, sacri fontis nemus, et delubra locantur

Judæis; quorum Cophinus, sænumque supellex.

Omnis enim populo mercedem pendere jussa est

Arbor, et ejectis mendicat sylva Camenis.

Sat. 3.

For it is hard to conceive, what affinity there should be between Jews and trees, unless it be from the custom, that their own oratories were usually shaded with them.

† Shuckford's Connection, vol. 3. lib. 12. (*n*) Josh. xxiv. 1.

only

only presented themselves before God. That so great a multitude could not meet together, and incamp in any place but where there is a proportionable compass of ground, is a matter self-evident; and that, in the confines of Shechem, there was a large and open country, extending perhaps as far as Shiloh, and very commodious for their reception, we have the attestation of holy writ. But then, since it is impossible for one man to speak to such a number of people and be heard, Joshua very probably singled out the chief and principal of them, such as he foresaw would succeed him in the government after his demise, and these he took with him to Shiloh; a place in the neighbourhood, where was the ark, or sanctuary of the Lord, that he might there, with the greater solemnity, give them his final charge, which they, in their turns, might deliver to their respective tribes.

Thus we have endeavoured to satisfy the several objections, which are usually made against some passages in the sacred history, during the government of Joshua: and if profane testimonies would be of any force; we might produce the accounts which their historians give us of Neptune's drying up the river Inachus, and of Agamemnon's denouncing a curse against any one that should repair Troy, to justify the narrative we have in Scripture of the miraculous passage of Jordan, and the resentment and indignation which Joshua conceived against Jericho. The ancient Hercules was certainly the same with Joshua. He is said to have waged war in behalf of the gods, against Typhœus, and the rest of the giants of old, even as Joshua fought the battle of the Lord against the inhabitants of Canaan, men of a vast stature, and at that time under the displeasure of Heaven. In conformity to the sacred record of God's destroying the confederate army of the Amorites with hail-stones, the ancient Heathens say, that Hercules was thus assisted in his war against the sons of Neptune; and Plutarch, in his life of Timoleon, tells us, that a terrible storm of hail, in the face of the Carthaginian army, gave him (though he had but very few forces to encounter them) a complete victory over them. The sun standing still is no new story: Callimachus (o) represents

(o) His words are these

Θεὸς ἐπὶ' ἐκείνον

Ἦλθε πᾶρ' Ἡελίος καλὸν ἄλλὰ βέλται
Δίφρον ἐπιήσας τὰ δὲ φάεα ληκύνονταί.

Callimachus in Dianam.
him

Most of
these things
confirmed
by Heathen
testimony.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. 1.
to the end.

him, as stopping the wheels of his chariot to hear the melody of a chorus of nymphs, wherewith he was so delighted, that it made him prolong the day : and though they are mistaken in the cause, yet the ancient poets discover a tradition of this miraculous event, * when they describe the heavens blushing, and the sun's standing still at the sight of the unnatural murder which Atreus committed. For if Statius mistake not, this bloody fact happened in the time of the Theban war, which, according to the best chronologists, was much about the time of Joshua's conquest of Canaan. But even supposing Statius, or any other author from whom he took the hint, are mistaken in their chronology *, the time of Phaeton's life (whose story of misguiding the chariot of the sun is supposed to take its rise from hence) will synchronize with the year of the sun's standing still in the days of Joshua. So that, as to the most wonderful transactions, which in this space of time we meet with in holy writ, God has not left himself without a witness ; forasmuch as the Heathen writers (though with some variation or disguise, according to the humour of their mythologists) are known to relate the same things.

DISSERTATION I.

Of the shower of Stones, and the sun's standing still.

The former of these miracles.

OF all the miraculous things that happened in Joshua's wars with the people of Canaan, the shower of stones which God sent upon his enemies, while they fled, and the stop which he put to the course of the sun, that he might have a longer space to destroy them in their flight, are the most remarkable, and do therefore deserve a more particular consideration.

* Tardius humenti noctem dejecit Olympo
Jupiter, et versum miti, reor, æthera cura
Sustinuit, dum fata vetant ; nec longinus unquam
Cessavere novæ, perfecto sole, tenebræ.

Statius Theb. lib. 1. etc. 5.

* The sun stood still in the days of Joshua, A. M. 1554, when Phaeton was about twenty-four years old, an age of ambition enough to desire, tho' not of ability to execute, the difficult province which he undertook; *Shuckford's Connection, vol. 3. lib. 12.*

The

The former of these events the sacred history represents in this manner—(p) *And it came to pass, that as they* ^{A. M. 2553, etc. Ant. Christ. 1451, etc.} *fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died. They were more which died of the hail-stones, than they which the children of Israel slew with the sword.* But the difference among commentators is, whether we are to understand this miracle of a shower of stones, properly so called, or of a shower of hail. from Josh. i. to the end.

The learned Calmet, in a dissertation prefixed to his commentary upon Joshua, has taken a great deal of pains to shew, that the stones, which the Lord is said to have cast upon the Amorites, were not ordinary hail-stones, (since it would be incongruous, as he thinks, to interest God in so common an occurrence), but real solid stones, which he supposes might have been engendered in the air by a whirlwind carrying up sand or gravel into a cloud, and there mixing it with some such oily or nitro-sulphureous matter, as might consolidate, and form it into a combustible body; that so, when, by frequent agitation, it came to be fired, it might burst through the cloud, and, scattering itself upon the explosion, might fall down upon the earth in the nature of a perfect shower of stones. Not effected with solid stone;

That great quantities of stones have in this manner been discharged from the clouds, is evident from several historians. Diodorus Siculus (q) informs us, that as the Persian army was on their march to plunder the temple at Delphos, thunder and lightning, and a violent storm of stones fell in their camp, and destroyed a great number of men. (r) In the reign of Tullus Hostilius, when news was brought to the government, that it had rained stones upon mount Alba, those who were sent to inquire into the matter, brought word, not only that the fact was true, but that these stones had fallen from the skies with an impetuosity equal to the most violent storm of hail. (s) Not long after the battle at Canæ, the same author assures us, that a storm of the same kind fell on the same mountain, which lasted for two whole days; and events of this nature, attested by the best authors, have been so frequent at Rome, at Capua, at Lavinium, and several other places in Italy,

(p) Josh. x. 11. (q) Vol. ii. lib. 11. (r) Liv. lib. 1. dec. 1. (s) Ibid. lib. 25, 30, 34.

A. M. that a man must be destitute of all modesty, who pretends
2553, etc. to deny them absolutely.
Ant. Christ.

1451, etc. Nay, not only great quantities of smaller stones, but
from Josh. i. sometimes stones of a prodigious size, have been known to
to the end. fall from the clouds, whereof this learned author, (t) a-
mong many others, gives us several instances, both of an-
cient and modern date. But then it is justly to be question-
ed, whether these authors have not suffered themselves to
be imposed on by the too-confident narrations of others.
We may suppose indeed, that whirlwinds, or hurricanes,
may raise the sand or gravel, and carry it on high, or some
sudden irruptions of subterraneous fire may discharge great
quantities of cinders, or ashes, into the air, where, meet-
ing with some exhalations of a sulphureous, oily, or nitro-
line quality, they may, by the pressure of the clouds, be
condensed, and hardened into a stony substance; yet, how
any cloud shall be able to support such a quantity of smal-
ler stones, much more of vast massy ones, as would be ne-
cessary to destroy the army of the five confederate kings,
and to continue falling down upon them from Bethhoron
to Azekah, places which lay in different tribes, and can
hardly be supposed less than twelve or fourteen miles di-
stant, (to say nothing of the many apertures in the earth,
which must have been seen afterwards in these parts, upon
supposition that the thing was effected by vulcanos), is a
matter not altogether so credible.

but hail-
stones only The truth is, there is no reason for carrying this miracle
so high; since a shower of hail-stones will not only do the
work every whit as well, but seems to be the genuine im-
port of Joshua's words; who having acquainted us, that
the Lord cast down great stones upon the Amorites, adds,
by way of explication, *that they were more that died by the
hail-stones than by the sword*; where it is reasonable to sup-
pose, that had there been great stones, as well as hail, the
death of the great numbers of those that perished would not
have been attributed to the hail only.

It is some confirmation of this exposition, that we find
the Septuagint, in both places of the text, translating it
 $\Delta\iota\tau\epsilon\varsigma\ \chi\alpha\lambda\alpha\zeta\eta\varsigma$, which Josephus (u) calls *a violent tempest of
hail-stones of a prodigious size*: and the author of (x) Eccle-
siasticus thus recounts the whole matter: *With hail-stones of*

(t) See Saurin's Dissert. likewise, who was given as a large
account hereof. (u) Antiq. lib. v. c. 1. (x) Chap. xlvi. 6.

a mighty power, he made the battle to fall violently upon the nations, and in the descent of Bethhoron, he destroyed them that resisted.

A. M.
2553, &c.,
Ant. Christ
1451, &c.,
from Jos. 1.
to the end

The prophet Ezekiel, in his predictions against Gog, introduces God as threatening, that (y) *he would plead against him with pestilence, and with blood, with an overflowing rain, and great hail-stones, fire, and brimstone.* And in another place, speaking of false prophets, who seduced his people into an opinion of their security, as if they had been fortified within a wall, he pursues the metaphor, and tells those who daubed it with intempered mortar, (z) *that it should fall; for there shall be an overflowing shower, says he, and ye, O great hail-stones, shall fall, and a stormy wind shall rent it.* So that from these, and several other passages of the like nature, we may learn, that in executing his judgments upon the face of the earth, hail-stones are very frequently arrows in the hands of the Almighty: and of what force they are to do execution, we are advertised in what befel the Egyptians, when (as the sacred history has related it) (a) *The Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran upon the ground: and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt; so there was hail, and fire mingled with hail, very grievous, such as there were none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast: It smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.* Nor are there examples of a later date wanting (especially in our philosophical transactions) of the vast havock and destruction that hail-stones (from (b) one to five pounds weight) have done in several places; killing both man and beast, and laying the whole country waste, for some sixty or seventy miles round. And therefore, since it is agreed on all hands, that hail-stones have frequently fallen, large enough to destroy never so great a number of people, when naked and defenceless against their blows, what need is there for our having recourse to any other solution?

(y) Chap. xxxviii. 22.
ix. 23. &c.
enq Rois.

(z) Ezek. xiii. 11.
(b) Saurin's Dissert. sur la deſaite des

(a) Exod.

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

A shower of hail, indeed, may be supposed to proceed from a mere natural cause; but when the event happened at the very instant where God promised to assist his people against their enemies; when, though it might have annoyed either army, it fell only on that which God had before determined to ruin; and fell so very heavily upon it, as to destroy more than the sword of the conquerors had done; such an event as this, I say, cannot but be looked upon as a miraculous interposition of Providence; how fortuitous soever the concurrence of second causes may be. In working of miracles, God usually employs natural causes and productions. He does not create any new thing for the purpose; but makes use of what is already created, in a new and extraordinary manner: and therefore, tho' the shower of hail, and probably the wind too, which made it fall with such impetuosity, were both of them natural; yet the sending them at the very nick of time, and directing them to fall upon the enemy only, in this there was manifestly the hand of God, and something supernatural.

The latter
miracle, of
what kind.

The other miracle is thus related in holy writ. (c) *Joshua said, in the sight of all Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon, in the valley of Ajalon: and the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves of their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day: and there was no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel.* Now, for the better understanding of these words, we must observe.

The man-
ner of Jo-
shua's ex-
pressing
himself
justified.

1. That nothing is more common in Scripture, than to express things, not according to the strict rules of philosophy, but according to their appearances, and the vulgar apprehension concerning them. The sun and moon, for instance, are called (d) *two great lights*; but however that title may agree with the sun, it is plain, that the moon is but a small body, the least that has yet been discovered in the planetary system, and that it has no light at all, but what it borrows, and reflects from the rays of the sun; and yet, because it is placed near us, it appears to us larger than other heavenly luminaries, and from that appearance the holy Scriptures give it such an appellation.

(c) Josh. x. 12. &c. (d) Gen. i. 16.

And in like manner, because the sun seems to us to move, and the earth to be at rest, the Scriptures speak a great deal of the pillars, and basis, and foundations of the earth, and of the sun's (e) *rejoicing, like a giant, to run his race*, and of (f) *his arising, and going down, and hasting to the place where he arose, &c.* Whereas it is certain, that (g) if the sun were made to revolve round about the earth, the * general law of nature would thereby be violated; the harmony and proportion of the heavenly bodies destroyed; and no small confusion and disorder brought into the frame of the universe: But, on the contrary, if the earth, turning upon its own axis every day, be made to go round the sun in the space of a year, it will then perform its circulation, according to same law which the other planets observe; and (without the least exception) there will be a most beautiful order and harmony of motions every where preserved through the whole frame of nature. As therefore the Scriptures were designed to teach us the art of holy living, and not to instruct us in the rudiments of natural knowledge, it can be deemed no diminution either to their perfection or divine authority, that they generally speak according to the common appearance of things, and not according

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

(e) Psal. xix. 5. (f) Ecclef. i. 5. (g) Keil's Astronomical lectures.

* Besides this general argument of Mr. Keil's, Mr. Whiston has one, which he accounts no less than a demonstration: "If the earth (says he) have an annual revolution about the sun, it must affect the apparent motion of all the other planets, and comets; and notwithstanding the regularity of their several motions in their own orbits, must render these regular motions, to us, as living upon the moving earth, sometimes direct, and that swiftly and slowly; sometimes stationary, and sometimes retrograde, and that swiftly or slowly also; and all this, at such certain periods, in such certain places, for such certain durations, and according to such certain circumstances, (as geometry and arithmetic will certainly determine), and not otherwise. Now, that this is the real case in fact, and that every one of these particulars are true in the astronomical world, all that are skilful in that science do freely confess, even those who do not think fit to declare openly for this annual revolution of the earth, which yet is the natural and certain consequence of that concession;" *Whiston's Astron. princ. of relig.* The reader that is desirous to know more both of the annual and diurnal motion of the earth, may consult Mr. Derham's Prelim. disc. to his Astro-Theol.

A. M. 2553, &c.
Ant. Christ. 3451, &c.
from Josh. i. to the end.

to their reality or philosophic truth. The plain matter of fact is, that, in the early ages, both before, and long after the days of Joshua, the most learned astronomers had no notion of the improvements which our modern professors have since attained to. They never once dreamed of the earth's rotation upon its own axis; but, according to common appearance, were fully persuaded, that the sun and moon had their respective courses. Upon this supposition they formed their schemes, and thought themselves able to answer every phenomenon by them. And therefore, if God had prompted Joshua to desire the prolongation of the day, in a manner more agreeable to our new astronomy, or to record the miracle in terms more suitable to it, this would have been a plain contrariety to all the rules of science then in use. The people who heard him utter the words, *Earth, rest upon thy axis*, would have thought him distracted, and those who read his account of what had happened, if related in suitable expressions, would have decried it as false in fact, or passed it by with contempt and disregard, as a wild fancy or blunder of his own.

In relation to the places where, and time when, this miracle was wrought.

2. In relation to the places over which the two heavenly bodies were to stand, the sun *over Gibeon*, and the moon *over the valley of Ajalon*, we must observe, that (even upon the supposition of the sun's motion) the Jewish general cannot be thought to speak in a proper and philosophic sense. For since the sun is almost a million of times bigger than the earth, and some millions of miles distant from it, to justify the strict sense of the words, a line drawn from the centre of the sun to that of the earth, must exactly pass by Gibeon, which we know it cannot do, because no part of the Holy Land lies within the tropics: And therefore we must conclude, that Joshua here speaks according to the outward appearance of things, which makes the sense of his words plain and intelligible.

Wherever we are, (if so be we are not hindered by objects, immediately surrounding us), we can cast our eye upon part of the surface of the earth, and at the same time take into our prospect some small extent of the firmament of heaven, which seems, as it were, to cover the other; and each celestial body which we perceive in this extent above, appears to us to be directly over such and such part of the earth, as we alternately turn our eyes to: And it is thus, that the sun, when Joshua spake, seemed to him, and to those that were with him, to *be over Gibeon, and the*

the moon to be over the valley of Ajalon. This valley, in all likelihood, took its name from some adjacent town ; but then, as there are three Ajalons mentioned in Scripture, one (*b*) in the tribe of Ephraim, another in (*i*) Zebulun, and another in (*k*) Dan, it is reasonable to think, that the place here spoken of was in Dan, the most remote province in Gibeon ; for we must suppose, that these two places were at some considerable distance, otherwise Joshua could not see the sun and moon both appear at the same time, as it is probable they were both in his eye, when he uttered these words.

3. In relation to the time when this miracle began, and how long it lasted, the Scripture's expression is, that the *sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day* : Which words can import no less, than that the sun stood still in the meridian, or much about noon, and that in this position it continued for the space of a civil or artificial day, *i. e.* for twelve hours. But (*l*) Maimonides is of opinion, (and in this he is followed (*m*) by some Christian writers), that there was no such cessation of the sun and moon's motion, but that the whole purport of the miracle was this :—" That God, " at Joshua's request, granted him and his soldiers such a " degree of spirits, activity, and dispatch, as enabled them " to gain a complete victory, and do as much execution in " one day, as might otherways have taken up two : " But this is a construction so repugnant to the genuine sense of the words, as to need no formal confutation.

There is something more, however, to be said to the notion of other learned men, who, with regard to the time when Joshua might send up his request, and the miracle begin, think it more probable that he should pray for a longer day, when he perceived the sun just going to leave him, than when it was in its height. But Joshua, no doubt, had reasons for what he did : He was an old experienced general, eager for a complete victory, and able to compute what time it would take to achieve it : so that his fear of losing any part of the present advantage, might make him pray that the day might be thus prolonged, until he had obtained the whole. If the sun, in its declension, had stopped its course, it might have answered his purpose

(*b*) 1 Chron. vi. 69. (*i*) Judg. xii. 12. (*k*) Josh. xix. 42.
(*l*) More Nevoch. part 2. chap. 39. (*m*) Grotius and Masius,
in locum.

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

perhaps; but then it had given a juster handle to the suggestions of those who would deny the whole merit of the miracle. For, if the retardation of the sun had not happened until it was going to set, (*n*) Spinosa might, with a much better grace, have attributed the extraordinary length of this day to the refraction of its rays from the clouds, which at that time were loaded with hail; or (*o*) Peirerius, to some *aurora borealis*, or *parhelium*, which, after the setting of the sun, might appear about the territories of Gibeon; and so be mistaken for the sun's standing still: But now, by fixing it in its meridian point, all these cavils are effectually silenced: and (*p*) God, no doubt, who heard him so readily, inspired the Hebrew general with that wish or prayer, which otherwise perhaps would never have come into his head.

The book
of Jasher,
what.

4. In relation to the book of *Jasher*, (or of *just and upright* men), which Joshua quotes as a voucher of the truth of this miracle, the opinions of learned men are much divided. (*q*) Some think, that it was the book of Genesis, which is here so called, because it treats of the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, three of the most righteous men that the world then knew. The Targum of Jonathan calls it *the book of the law*, as containing not only the chief precepts which God gave his people, but several promises likewise of the wonders which he intended to work for them. (*r*) Josephus, and some interpreters after him, will have it to be certain annals of the lives and particular adventures of some Jewish worthies, and of other things remarkable that happened to that nation; tho' others again suppose, that this was only a collection of some verses, which the Israelites thought themselves concerned to learn by heart, the better to remember the miracles which God had been pleased to vouchsafe them. But whatever the subject of this book was, or, † whether it was composed in prose

(*n*) Traët. Theolog. Politic. c. 2. (*o*) Præadam. lib. 4. c. 6. (*p*) Calmet's Dissert. sur le Commandement, etc. (*q*) J. Jarch. in Josh. x. 13. (*r*) Antiq. lib. 10. c. 17.

† M. Le Clerc has taken the pains to versify the two places where mention is made of the sun's standing still, by the transposition of some words, in order to make it appear at least probable, that the author of the book of Joshua, in quoting them out of that of Jasher, had only reduced them to historical prose by the contrary transposition. But besides the difficulty of telling us what kind of verses these are, (since the art of scanning Hebrew poetry has been lost

prose or verse, it is a groundless conjecture to say, (s) that it was wrote in a figurative and hyperbolical style, or that the quotation which Joshua takes from it, is so to be understood. The design of the quotation is only to confirm what Joshua had said concerning the retardation of the sun; and therefore, if the book of Joshua affirms, that the sun did stand still, that of Jasher (in what style soever it was written) must necessarily be supposed to do the same; otherwise it would have been to no purpose to have cited it.

A. M. 2553, etc.
Ant. Christ. 1451, etc.
from Josh. i. to the end.

It cannot be denied indeed, but that, upon some occasions, the sacred penmen do use figures, and poetical expressions; but then the sense and chain of the discourse do easily discover it when they do so. Whenever they intend to express themselves in a figurative manner, there is usually something going before, which prepares the reader for it; and besides that figurative expressions cannot be long continued, there is always something apparently in them, that can by no means be reduced to a literal sense. But now, in the Scripture-account of this transaction,

And the whole narrative of this miracle literal.

lost as long as St. Jerom's days, if he supposes them to be only rhymes and cadences, it is no uncommon thing, we know, to meet with several passages both in the scriptural and other prose writers, which, with a small variation of the text, are capable of this harmonious turn, and yet were originally never so intended. It is to be observed however, that though the words, *so the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hastened not to go down about a whole day*, are probably cited from some ancient record, yet the preceding ones, *and the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies*, (Josh. x. 13.) are the author's own, wherein he talks, not in the loftiness of a poet, but in the plainness and simplicity of a historian. And therefore it is, at least, a bold assumption to say, that a writer, who barely appeals to another for the truth of a single instance, has taken the whole from him. The most that can be fairly concluded from such an appeal, is, that the fact is equally affirmed by both, either in the same or equivalent terms; whereas, had the terms of the *sun's standing still in the midst of heaven*, been intended to mean no more, than that there remained so much light after its setting, occasioned by some unusual refraction, as made the whole army think it was still above the horizon, no honest man (for fear of imposing on his reader) would have cited them, without modifying their sense, or giving them an explanation; *Saurin's Dissert. sur la descente des cinq Roys*; and *Univ. Hist. lib. i. c. 7.*

(s) Grotius and Le Clerc *in locum*.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

where do we perceive any thing like this? (t) Joshua, seeing the enemy put to the rout, begs of God to give him a complete victory, and at the same time, out of the zeal and fervour of his mind, commands the sun and moon not to advance any farther, until he had effected his desire. The sacred historian tells us, that, at his command, these heavenly luminaries actually did stand still; and to evince the credibility of a thing so marvellous, having produced the testimony of another author that makes mention of the same event, he thereupon concludes, that (u) *there was no day like that, before it or after it, that God hearkened to the voice of a man.* Here, we see, are all the tokens imaginable of a simple, literal, and historical narration: And the reader must therefore be strangely prejudiced against the belief of all miracles whatever, who can possibly distort such plain and uniform expressions into any figurative or metaphorical sense, in order to evade the force of this.

An objection.

“ But if there really was such a miracle wrought, it is somewhat strange, that the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, when he certainly makes mention of things of less moment, should entirely forget this, or that we should have no memorial of it recorded by any prophane writer. God is not so prodigal of his miracles, one would think, as to reverse the whole order of nature, and stop the sun in its regular course, merely that a victory might be obtained in one day, which, every whit as well, might have been gained in two; though it cannot be denied, but that, if it was so, his *hearkening to the voice of Joshua*, gave him a preeminence far above Moses, (forasmuch as all his miracles were nothing in comparison of this), even though the Scriptures say expressly, that (x) *there rose not a prophet, in all Israel, like unto Moses, in all signs and wonders, which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, and in the wilderness.*”

Answered,
by shewing
the reasons
why St. Paul
omitted it.

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, in (y) the chapter now under debate, meant no more, than to give his reader some notable instances of the wonderful power of faith. To have been too curious in the choice of these instances, especially when he wrote to persons of the same nation, and who were as well acquainted with these things as himself, would have savoured too much of art and human

(t) Calmet's Dissert. sur le commandement, &c. (u) Josh. x. 14. (x) Deut. xxxiv. 10, 11. (y) Chap. xi.

wisdom,

wisdom, which inspired authors always professedly avoid; and to have been too prolix in the commemoration of them, would have spoiled the form of his epistle, by swelling that part of it beyond its due proportion.

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1451, etc.
from Josh. 1.
to the end.

The apostle himself seems to be sensible of this; and therefore we find him cutting himself short, omitting some, and reckoning up several other instances in the gross; and (2) *what shall I more say? For the time would fail me, to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Sampson, and of Jephtha; of David also, and Samuel, and all the prophets.* You see, that in the catalogue of his worthies, he observes no great method in enumerating them, nor does he so much as mention Joshua, though his character be vastly superior to that of Gideon, and others that he takes notice of; and therefore, if his omitting this particular of the *fun's standing still* may be deemed a sufficient argument against its reality, by parity of reason, all the other miraculous transactions which he has thought proper not to mention, such as the plagues of Egypt, the wonders in the wilderness, the passage of Jordan, and several others of the like nature, must be reputed destitute of truth, how frequently soever they may be recorded in other parts of holy writ.

And in like manner, though we find no mention made of this wonderful event in Heathen writers, yet this is no valid objection against it, because it happened many ages before there was any historians or chronologers, that we know of, extant to record it. Or if we think that a fact so very remarkable could have hardly escaped a general observation, why may we not suppose, that the public archives or monuments wherein it was recorded, in the long and obscure time that intervened before any of our present historians arose, have been lost; and that nothing has been transmitted to us, (except what we have in sacred writ), but an uncertain tradition, clouded with fable, and poetical fictions.

Why H. a-
then au-
thors.

It can hardly be thought indeed, but that the humour which the poets had, * of imputing to magic the power of stopping the stars in their courses, and what they re-

(2) Ver. 32.

* Cessavère vices rerum, dilataque longa
Hesit nocte dies : Legi non paruit æther,
Torpuît et præcep̃s, audito carmine, mundus.

Lucan's *Pharf.* lib. 6.

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Chriſt.
1451, &c.
from Joſh. i.
to the end.

late of their heroes and demigods being able to lengthen days or nights, as it beſt ſerved their military or amorous purpoſes, proceeded from ſomething : And to what can we aſcribe it more properly, than to a glimmering knowledge which they might, from tradition, have of this miraculous event ? But however this be, it is certain that the argument drawn from the ſilence of Heathen authors, can be of no validity againſt the truth of this miracle, ſince it did not happen in any age when the earlieſt of them lived, and might therefore be what they knew nothing of ; ſince all their works have not deſcended to us, and in what is loſt, they perhaps might have related it, as in what is extant, we are ſure they ſay nothing to contradict it.

(a) It muſt be reckoned a point of juſtice then, and a kind of right belonging to all nations, to be determined, in what concerns the hiſtory of any country, by the hiſtory of thoſe people, who are preſumed to be better acquainted with their own affairs, than any ſtrangers can : And therefore we cannot, without apparent prejudice, deny this privilege to the Hebrew writers, even though we found ſome Heathen teſtimonies not entirely according with them. But when nothing of this is pretended ; on the contrary, when (as far as theſe dark times would permit) there is a concurrence and harmony between them, there can be no ſhadow of reaſon for calling in queſtion their veracity, unleſs the things which they relate be either impoſſible or contradictory, which, in the caſe before us, can never be affirmed ; becauſe it is ſure and ſelf-evident, that the author of nature, who gave being and motion to the ſun and ſtars, may ſtop that motion, and make them ſtand ſtill, when, and as long as he pleaſes ; eſpecially when their reſt will contribute to his glory, (as it certainly did in this inſtance), as much as their continued motion does.

Reaſons for
God's
working
this mira-
cle.

God indeed never works any miracle but upon a juſt and proper occaſion ; but then we ought to remember, that this battle againſt the confederate kings was fought not offenſively, but deſenſively, on the ſide of Iſrael, in order to ſave a people whom they had ſolemnly taken under their protection. The Gibeonites, as is generally ſuppoſed, were a commonwealth, for which reaſon they might not enter into a league with the five kings ; and, as a free people, they had a right, no doubt, to take all proper meaſures for their ſafety. Joſhua therefore could not but

(a) Calmet's Diſſert. ſur le commandement, &c.

look

look upon the confederacy formed against them, as cruel and unjust, and himself obliged in honour not to refuse the oppressed the succours they requested of him, upon any pretence whatever; since God's honour was likewise concerned in the preservation of a people, who had entered into an alliance with his own inheritance, and had their alliance ratified by the mouth of his high-priest, and with the sanction of his most blessed name. Upon these considerations, Joshua loses no time, but marches all the night to their assistance; and, on the next day, God is pleased to reward his faithfulness and zeal with a most miraculous victory, whereby he not only rescued his allies, but made all the land of Canaan sensible likewise, that a greater and more powerful God was on Israel's side, than any whom they worshipped, (b) by stopping the sun and moon (which were two of the principal dieties, whom those idolatrous people adored) in the midst of their course.

God might, no doubt, in the compass of two days, have enabled the Israelites to have gained a complete conquest over their enemies, without the expence of a miracle (as these men call it). But then, had this been obtained by the dint of the sword only, it would have been imputed to their superiour valour and strength, and deemed no more than the common fate of war; or, had there nothing more remarkable happened in it, than a shower of large hail-stones, this might have been thought owing to chance or natural causes, or at most been only known in that neighbourhood: whereas, the stopping of the two great luminaries, in the height of their career, (which could not but be universally seen and felt); was enough to convince these poor deluded people, that the gods, whom they trusted in, were subject to the God of Israel, and at the same time deter the Israelites from falling into the like idolatry, from (c) *kissing their hand* (as Job expresses that form of worship) *when they beheld the sun as it shined, or the moon walking in its brightness*; to convince them, I say, that (d) *the gods of the Heathens were but idols*, and that it is the Lord who made, and who ruleth in the heavens.

It cannot be questioned, but that the fame of this miracle raised Joshua's reputation to an high degree, nor (e) can we see any inconvenience in admitting, that this was a

A. M. 2553, etc.
Ant. Chris. 1451, etc.
from Josh. i. to the end.

(b) Patrick's Comment *in locum*. (c) Job xxxi. 26. (d) Psal. xcvi. 5. (e) Calmet's Differt. sur le commandement, etc.

Joshua, notwithstanding this miracle, not superior to Moses.

more

A. M.
2553, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1451, &c.
from Josh. i.
to the end.

more remarkable miracle than any which Moses ever did : because it does not therefore follow, that Joshua, in other respects, was a person of greater eminence than Moses. Our blessed Saviour tells his disciples, (f) *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.* And yet he gives us to understand in another place, that (g) *the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord.*

Elisha was the servant and attendant on the prophet Elijah, and yet it is certain, that according to our estimate, he did more and greater miracles than his master did ; for even (h) *after his death his body prophesied* ; (as the son of Sirach expresses it) ; *he did wonders in his life, and at his death were his works mervellous.* And therefore we need not account it a strange thing, that we find Joshua here doing a miracle, which, in our opinion, surpasses all that ever Moses did : because God's making use of the ministry of one man, rather than another, in his surpassing works of wonder, is no certain proof of the man's superiour merit ; since in this, as well as any other dispensation, he is at perfect liberty (i) *to chuse* (if he pleases) *the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty ; yea, and base things, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.*

But after all, we talk of greater and less miracles, when in reality there are no such degrees of comparison between them. For what is it that makes us account one work of this kind greater than another ? If it be, because we conceive more difficulty in the doing it ; this, with regard to God, (the sole author of all miracles), is a great mistake, for as much as all things are equally easy to his almighty power. The motion, and other properties of every created being, were at first impressed by him : (k) *He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast* ; and with the same facility, he can retard or suspend their operations ; for they have no power of resisting the very first beck of his will. Since every thing, therefore, that is contrary to the ordinary course of nature, requires the interposition of an almighty power, and whatever is not impossible in itself, is equally possible to God ; with him there can be no difference between passing the Jordan, and pas-

(f) John xiv. 12. (g) Matth. x. 24. (h) Eccclus. xlviii. 13, 14. (i) 1 Cor. i. 27, etc. (k) Psal. xxxiii. 9.

sing the Red-sea, between drawing water out of the stony rock, and arresting the sun in the firmament of heaven; for (1) *whatever he pleased, that did he; in heaven, and in the earth, in the sea, and in all deep places.*

A. M.
2553, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1451, etc.
from Josh. i.
to: he en d.

(1) Psal. cxxxv. 6.

CH A P. II.

From the Death of Joshua to the Death of Sampson.

THE HISTORY.

AFTER the death of Joshua *, no particular person, that we read of, succeeded him in the government; and therefore the most probable opinion is, that every tribe was governed by their respective heads, or elders, (which form of government subsisted about thirty years), and that, in their wars with the Canaanites, they made them their commanders. For several of the Canaanitish kings remaining still unconquered, the Israelites unanimously resolved to set about their reduction; and accordingly repaired to the oracle at Shiloh, to ask directions of God, which tribe should begin the war. God's orders were, that the tribe of Judah should begin; and therefore they, taking to their assistance the tribe of Simeon, first set upon the cruel † king of Bezek: sacked the

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end.
of Ruth.
After the
death of
Joshua, se-
veral tribes
conquer se-
veral parts
of Canaan.

* The Samaritan Chronicle tells us indeed, that in the last assembly which Joshua held, he nominated twelve chiefs, of every tribe one, and put it to the lot, who should succeed him in the government; that the lot fell upon his nephew Abel, whom he accordingly crowned, and invested with other ensigns of honours, etc.; but this is thought to be no more than a fabulous account, invented to fill up this void space of time; *Saurin's Dissert. sur Heglon, Roi des Moabites tué, &c.*

† There is another place in Scripture, viz. 1 Sam. xi. 8. where Bezek is mentioned; and since Eusebius and Jerom tell us, that there were in their days two towns, about seventeen miles from Shechem, of the same name; and not far distant from each other, we see nothing of moment to hinder them from being both but one city in former times; *Well's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. ii.*

town,

A. M. town, killed ten thousand of its inhabitants, and as he was
 2561, &c. endeavouring to make his escape, seized him, and cut † off
 Ant. Christ. his thumbs and great toes, in the like manner as he had
 1443, &c. done to no less than seventy little kings or princes, whom
 from Jud. i. he compelled to gather their meat, like dogs, under his
 to the end. of Ruth. table : so that the similitude of his punishment made the
 tyrant reflect upon his own cruelty, and acknowledge the
 justice of God in what he had brought upon him.

After the conquest of Bezek, the two united tribes †
 invested Jerusalem, and having taken it, put the inhabi-
 tants to the sword, and set the place on fire. They thence
 marched to Hebron ; and having made themselves masters
 of it, went to attack Debir, which was part of Caleb's al-
 lotment, though the Canaanites at that time had posses-
 sion of it. Caleb, † who in all probability was general
 in

† The reason of their mutilating him in this manner, was to
 make him incapable of war any more, being unable to handle
 arms, by reason of the loss of his thumbs, or to run swiftly,
 (which was a notable quality in a warrior in those days), by the
 loss of his great toes ; *Patrick's Comment.* in locum.

† We do not read, that Jerusalem was ever taken by Joshua,
 though it seems highly probable, that when he took the King
 of Jerusalem, he did to it as he did to the rest of the cities be-
 longing to those kings, Josh. x. 3, 23. But when he was gone
 to conquer other parts of the country, it is likely that the old
 inhabitants returned again, and took possession of it, for the
 land was not then divided among the Israelites. But as Joshua,
 a little before his death, divided the land, and this city fell, in
 part, to the share of the tribe of Judah, they dispossessed the
 Jebusites, that dwelt there, of all but the strong fortress, on the
 top of Mount Sion, which held out till the days of David ;
Patrick's Commentary.

† Who was their general on this occasion, is not expressly
 mentioned either in Scripture, Josephus, or any other ancient
 historian ; and yet it is hardly to be questioned, but that Ca-
 leb was the person. He was of the tribe of Judah, older than
 any other by twenty years ; and yet, like Moses, he continued
 in his full strength and vigour. He and Joshua were the only
 two spies, who, having searched the land, gave a true report
 of it ; and therefore, as Joshua was the first general, he had
 the greatest right to succeed him ; and this might be the rea-
 son why Joshua, at his death, named no other. He and Jo-
 shua were the two only persons to whom the Israelites gave in-
 heritances for their signal services ; and as his inheritance lay
 unconquered in this tribe, he had the greatest reason to be ac-
 tive

in these wars, being resolved to storm the place, made proclamation in the camp, that whoever should attack, and carry it, should have his daughter Achsah as a reward of his valour : which his gallant nephew Othniel, son to his younger brother Kenaz, achieved, and so, not only obtained the beautiful damsel for his wife, but with her a large estate likewise in a well-watered country, which, at her request, her father very generously bestowed on him.

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

Thus the tribe of Simeon assisted that of Judah to subdue the mountainous parts about Jerusalem, and the southern parts adjoining to the wilderness of Paran ; and when this was done, the tribe of Judah, in like manner, assisted the Simeonites to take Gaza, Ashkelon, and Zephah, which was then called *Hormah* ; so that these places, in after-ages, came into their possession. Encouraged by these successes, the family of Joseph undertook the conquest of Bethel ; and to this purpose, sent out spies to take a survey of the town, and to gain what intelligence they could. They perceiving a man coming out of it, immediately seized him, but promised to spare his life, upon condition that he would give them the best information he could, in what way the town was approachable. The man did so : and by his information they succeeded so well, that sending for their forces, they entered the place, and put all the inhabitants to the sword, except the man who had given them intelligence, and his family.

The other tribes had equally good success in gaining the possession of the lands that were allotted them ; only the tribe of Dan was compelled to quit the plains for fear of the Amorites, and to retire into the mountainous parts of the country, where they were pent up for some time, until the family of Joseph came to their assistance ; and having restrained the insolence of their enemies, reduced them to a narrower tract of land than what they had at first.

One great defect, however, in those that were successful against the Canaanites, was, that they did not make a right use of their victories, but either through a misplaced lenity, or covetousness, instead of destroying them, (as

They keep company with the natives, fall into idolatry, and are oppressed.

they in reducing it. His name alone is mentioned in all these wars ; and as his son-in-law, Othniel, was the first deliverer of the Israelites from their oppressions, he seems to have succeeded Caleb in this dignity, as his nearest and most valiant relation ;

Bedford's Scripture-chronology, lib. 5. c. 3.

A. M. they were commanded), suffered them to live promiscuouſly among them, and contented themſelves with making them tributary; which ſo far incenſed God, that he ſent an † angel from Gilgal, to expoſtulate the matter, with them; to remind them of the favours which he had vouchſafed them, in delivering them out of Egypt, and bringing them into that happy land, of his punctual performances of all the promiſes he had made them, and of their vile ingratitude in rejecting his precepts, for which he had very juſtly withdrawn his protection from them.

2561, &c.
Ant Chriſt.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end.
of Ruth.

This reproof made the people, for the preſent, a little ſenſible of their tranſgreſſion, ſo that they fell into a general lamentation; and deploring the wretchedneſs of their condition, offered ſacrifices to God, in order to appeaſe his wrath. But no ſooner was this fit of humiliation over, but continuing ſtill their correſpondence with the Canaanites, indulging themſelves in their looſe converſation, and making intermarriages with them, they fell into idolatry, and worſhipped Baal and Aſhteroth, and other idols of the heathen, which ſo provoked the Lord, that he left them to themſelves; and they (without his protection) made ſo weak a defence, that they were often taken, and inflaved by their enemies.

† The Jews are generally of opinion, that by this angel we are to underſtand a prophet who was ſent by God, as a meſſenger, which the word very often imports; and this meſſenger they commonly take to have been Phineas, who was employed upon this errand. We can ſee no reaſon, however, for their departing from the uſual ſignification of the word, eſpecially when there is no abſurdity in it, and the ſenſe of the context ſeems to require our attaining it. Nay, there is reaſon to ſay, that the perſon who here reproves the Iſraelites, was ſomething more than a created angel; for who but God can ſpeak in this ſtyle, *I made you to go out of Egypt*? No prophet, nor any created angel durſt have been ſo bold: and therefore, the opinion of moſt Chriſtian interpreters is, that it was the Son of God, who is frequently in Scripture called *the angel of the covenant*. And ſit it was for him to appear now, as coming from Gilgal, to put them in mind of his illuſtrious appearance near that place once before, of the aſſurance he then gave them of his preſence with them in the conqueſt of the land, and of the ſolemn covenant he made with them, by renewing of circumciſion. The angel's coming up from Gilgal is therefore mentioned, as a very pertinent circumſtance, to upbraid the Iſraelites with their baſe ingratitude to God, and with their ſloth in not endeavouring to expel the Canaanites; *Patrick's Commentary*.

The first oppressor that the Israelites had, was named *A. M.*
Chusan-Prisbathiam. He was king of Mesopotamia, and *2561, &c.*
 when he invaded the territories of Israel, he made an ea- *Ann. Chris.*
 sy conquest, and imposed a tribute on them, which lasted *1443, &c.*
 for eight years; but at the expiration of that time, God *from Jud. i.*
 raised up Othniel, Caleb's son-in-law, (who was the first *to the end*
 of those whom the Scripture calls *Judges*), and inspired *of Ruth.*
 him with courage and resolution to take up arms against the
 king of Mesopotamia, whom he soon defeated, and settled
 the Israelites in a state of peace and tranquillity, which last-
 ed for forty years. But, during this space of time, the peo-
 ple fell into a general apostacy, and corruption of man-
 ners, whereof the † two following stories are sad and re-
 markable instances.

The tribe of Dan (as we said before) being pent up in *The sad*
 the mountainous parts, found their territories much too *impiety and*
 narrow for them; and therefore they sent out of their bo- *wickedness*
 dy five spies to survey the country, and bring them in in- *of these*
 telligence, in what part of the regions round about they *times,*
 might most likely extend their bounds. The spies, in their *shown in*
 journey, came to the house of Micah of Mount Ephraim, *two instan-*
 whose mother, thinking it too much trouble to go to Shi- *ces,*
 loh to worship, and offer sacrifices there, had made an
 idol, and placed it in a private chapel of her son's building:
 For her son had an † Ephod and Teraphim, and, for some
 time,

† These two stories are related in the 17th, 18th, and 19th
 chapters of Judges, and being so placed, they may seem to be-
 long to the latter part of this period; whereas, in the judg-
 ment of most learned men, they were transacted much about
 this time. It is plain from the text, (chap. xvii. 6.), that these
 these things happened *when there was no king* (i. e. no ruler,
 for, properly speaking, there had hitherto been no king) *in Is-*
rael, but every man did what was right in his own eyes; and the rea-
 son why Samuel, or whoever was the author of this book, places
 them here, is because he was not willing to break the thread
 of his history by intermixing these matters with it, but reserv-
 ed them to be related apart by themselves; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† That the divine service might be performed with a greater
 resemblance of what was done at the tabernacle in Shiloh, he
 made priestly ornaments; for so some learned men take the E-
 phod to comprehend, not only the breast-plate adjoining to it,
 but all the rest of the vestments used by the high-priest. His
 intention was to set up an oracle in his own house, in imitation
 of the sanctuary of Moses; and therefore, to make the confor-

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1453, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end.
of Ruth.

time, had consecrated one of his own sons to be his priest, until a Levite, who had dwelt some time at Bethlehem, Judah, travelling from thence to seek a better settlement, happened to call at Micha's house, and by him was hired to execute that office; whereupon the man was fond enough to believe, that God would prosper him not a little, now that he had got a Levite to be his priest.

The idolatry of the Danites.

It happened, that some of these spies being acquainted with this Levite, and, after some discourse, understanding in what capacity he served Micah, desired of him to ask counsel of God, what success they might possibly promise themselves in the enterprize they were going upon, and with the encouragement which he gave them, they proceeded on their search, until they came to Laish; where, observing a pleasant and fruitful country, and the people living in a secure and negligent manner, without any rule or discipline among them, they returned to their brethren, and gave them an account how fruitful the country was, and how easily, in their opinion, the place might be taken by surprize.

mity the greater, it is supposed that he erected a kind of ark, whereon he placed two Teraphims to answer the two cherubims in the tabernacle, as he caused the priest who officiated for him to wear an Ephod, in the manner that the high-priest did when he consulted God. Mr. Selden (in his *Syntagma* 1. De diis Syriis, cap. 2.) well observes, that the worship of the true God and of idols, was here blended together. The Ephod and the Levite, which Micah afterwards provided, were intended, no doubt, for the service of the true God; but the graven image and Teraphim, by which the children of Dan desired the Levite to inquire of God, belonged unto Demons. They neither trusted to the Ephod alone, which related to God, nor to the Teraphim alone, which was their own invention, but thought it necessary to join both together in divine worship: And thus began idolatry in Israel, by the superstition of an old woman, who put this in her son's head. This woman, many of the Jews suppose to be the same with Dalilah, who, having got so much money of every one of the Lords of the Philistines, thought it expedient to employ some of it in expressing her devotion. But this is an idle conceit, that has no other foundation, than Dalilah's being mentioned in the foregoing chapter; whereas Micah was some hundred years prior to her; *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Jurieu's Hist. des dogmes et cult. par. 3.*

Upon this, the Danites drew out a party of six hundred men, and sent them to take possession of the city of Laish : But in their way through mount Ephraim, they called at Micah's house, and, in his absence, seized the Levite, the Ephod, the Teraphim, and other images that Micah had made; and as the Levite was remonstrating against what they had done, they soon pacified him, by representing the advantage of being a priest to a whole tribe rather than any one family; and with the hopes of that, he went very willingly along with them.

Micah returning home, and understanding that his priest and his gods were gone, musters up his friends, and pursues the Danites; but when he came up with some of the hindmost of them, and was making his complaint against the injury they had done, they wished him to be gone; for that, if he persisted to irritate the rest of the party, it would certainly cost him and his friends their lives: And so continuing their march, on the third day they came to Laish, where, finding it unguarded, they burnt the city, destroyed the inhabitants, and took possession of the country; but, in a short time after, they rebuilt the city, which, after the name of their father, was called *Dan*, and here setting up the images which they had stolen from Micah, they made this same Levite (whose name was Jonathan) their priest: And in this state of idolatrous worship they continued for about three hundred years, even unto the time † that the ark of God was taken captive by the Philistines, which was in the days of Samuel.

Not

† The words of the text are: — *And the children of Dan set up the graven image, and Jonathan and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan, until the day of the captivity of the land*, Judg. xviii. 30. But then the question is, What we are to understand by *captivity of the land*? Now there are two times mentioned in Scripture, when the children of Israel were carried away captive, by Tiglath-Pileser, when he took *Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them into Assyria*, 2 Kings xv. 29: and 2dly, by Salmonasser, who *carried Israel away, and placed them in Halah, and in Habor, by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes*, 2 Kings xvii. 11. And to one of these, the words of the text are supposed by some learned men to refer; but then it must necessarily follow, that this book was written in later times, even after the former of these captivities at least. It can hardly be supposed however, that these images should be

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

And the
war of the
Benjamites.

Not long after this, the war of the Benjamites broke out, which is another tragical piece of history, and as pregnant a proof of the people's immorality, as the other is of their apostacy. The substance of the story is this. —

* A Levite of Mount Ephraim, having taken a wife out of Bethlehem-Judah, who proved a lewd woman, she made an elopement from her husband to her father's house, where she continued for some months. The Levite however, being willing to be reconciled to her, went to bring her home; but, in his return, happening to be benighted, he was obliged to turn * into Gibeah, where an old man of Mount Ephraim, who was only an inmate there, after some conversation, received him into his lodgings. But while they were at supper, the men of the city beset the

suffered to continue in the days of David, who was a man after God's own heart, and studied to advance true religion to the utmost of his power all the country over, from Dan to Beer-sheba; and therefore others, with good reason, conclude, that by *the captivity of the land*, is meant the taking of the ark by the Philistines, and carrying it captive into the temple of Dagon; for so the Psalmist expressly calls that unlucky event: *He forsook the tabernacle in Shiloh, even the tent that he had pitched among them; he delivered their power into captivity, and their beauty into the enemies hands*, Psal. lxxviii. 60, 61.; Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.

* Josephus relates this story with a good deal of variation from the sacred history: — That the Levite's wife was not a lewd woman, but one who did not well agree with her husband, for which reason she left him, and went to her father; that the young men of Gibeah, seeing her to be a very beautiful woman, took notice of the house where she went in, and came and demanded her, and not the Levite himself, as the Scripture has it; that the Levite did not turn her out, but that the young men took her by force, and carried her to their own quarters, where they spent the whole night in all manner of bestial liberties, and then sent her back again next morning; that, upon her return, she fell into such a confusion of thought, for what had befallen her that night, that (what between shame and indignation) she sunk down upon the ground, and expired; that the Israelites, met in convention, sent to the Benjamites to deliver up the malefactors, who had committed this brutal violence upon the Levite's wife, which they refused to do, as thinking it dishonourable, for fear of a war, to submit to rules of other people's prescribing, &c.; *Josephus, lib. iv. c. 2.*

* Gibeah lay north of Jerusalem, about twenty or thirty furlongs from it, and was built upon an hill, as its name imports; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. iii.*

house,

house, and demanded to have the stranger brought out to them, that, according to the sin of Sodom, they might know him. It is in vain to use intreaties to so rude a rabble. The good old man offered them his own daughter, who was a virgin; and, at length, by consent the Levite's wife was turned out among them. They abused her all that night, and the next morning she was found dead at the threshold, which enraged her husband to such a degree, that, taking her home with him, he cut her dead body into twelve parts, and sent one to every tribe, with an account of the inhospitable treatment he met with at Gibeah; that so, in a general assembly of Israel, it might be resolved, what method of revenge it was proper to take upon this dismal occasion.

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

The assembly agreed, that never so inhuman an act had been known in Israel, since the time they left Egypt; and thereupon came to a resolution to bring the offenders to condign punishment, and, in order to that, sent messengers to them, demanding the men that had committed this outrage; but they refused to deliver them; and, in order to defend the criminals, mustered up all their forces. The army of the Benjamites consisted but of six and twenty thousand, whereas that of all Israel amounted to four hundred thousand men; and yet, in two several engagements, the Benjamites had the better of them; for, in the former, they killed them twenty-two thousand, and in the latter, eighteen thousand men. But the misconduct of the Israelites upon this occasion was, that being too confident of the goodness of their cause, and the superiority of their numbers, when they went to consult God, they only inquired of him which of the tribes should lead the van, without placing their confidence in him, or depending upon his assistance for success, which these repeated defeats brought to their remembrance; and therefore, before the third engagement, they humbled themselves in a proper manner before God, and from his encouragement, attacked the Benjamites once more. But to make their victory the more secure, they laid an ambuscade behind the city, which, while they pretended to fly, entered it, and set it on fire; whereupon the main body of the Israelitish army faced about, and charged so furiously upon the Benjamites, that they slew five and twenty thousand of them, set fire to their city, and destroyed all that belonged to them. It so happened however, that six hundred of them (which were all that remained of the tribe) made their escape

A. M. 2561, &c. Ant. Christ. 1443, &c. escape into the wilderness, and sheltered themselves in the fortrefs of Kimmon.

When the heat of the action was over, and the Israelites began to reflect coolly on what they had done, they were grieved not a little; and that the rather, because at the beginning of this war, they had all taken a rash oath not to marry their daughters to any of the Benjamites : So that how to recruit the tribe they could not tell, until they be-
 thought themselves of these two expedients. When the war first broke out, they had bound themselves by oath, to put all to the sword who would not join them in the common cause against the Benjamites ; and finding by their muster-roll, that the people of Jabesh-Gilead had neglected to come, they dispatched twelve thousand men, with orders to put man, woman, and child to the sword, except such virgins as were marriageable, whom they intended to give to the Benjamites for wives. For by this time the Benjamites were reconciled to the rest of the people, had left their strong hold, and were come into the camp ; so that when the men returned from the slaughter of the Gileadites, they brought four hundred virgins along with them, which were immediately given to the Benjamites ; but as the Benjamites were six hundred in number, there was not for every man one, and therefore they betook themselves to another expedient.

The manner of recruiting their slaughtered tribe.

Once every year, † there was a festival kept at Shiloh, whither the young women of the country used constantly

† All the three great festivals were to be observed in the place where God settled his habitation, which was now at Shiloh ; and therefore some of us imagine, that the feast here mentioned, was one of these ; particularly, they think it was the feast of tabernacles, because this was season of great joy, for having newly gathered their vintage, and the only season wherein the Jewish virgins were allowed to dance. At this time they dwelt in booths too, behind which the Benjamites (as they fancy) might very conveniently conceal themselves, and so watch an opportunity of carrying away the virgins : But what seems to make against this opinion is, that at any of these public festivals, the concourse of people would have been too great for a design of this nature to be put in execution, since the violence, which must of course have been offered to the young women, would hardly have met with a general connivance. It is much more probable therefore, that this was some festival peculiar to the people of Shiloh, which the Benjamites perhaps might know nothing of, and were therefore put in mind

stantly to come and dance. The Israelites therefore suggested to the Benjamites, that as many as wanted wives might at this time repair to the place, and concealing themselves in the vineyards, seize upon the young women, as they came out a dancing, and carry them off to their own habitations. The Benjamites accordingly pursued their instructions; and, watching their opportunity, took every one his damsel away with him: So that, having by this means got themselves wives, they settled again in their own country, and began by degrees to recruit their tribe.

After the death of Othniel, the Israelites again revolted from the service of God, and God, to chastise them for it, suffered Eglon, king of Moab, to subdue them; so that, for eighteen years together, they were forced to be tributary to him. But upon their humiliation and repentance, he raised them up a man, even, out of the diminished tribe of Benjamin, who wrought their deliverance, but in a method no ways to be justified, under a less supposition than that he had a divine commission for so doing.

Every year it was customary for the Israelites to send a present or tribute to the king of Moab, and for that year Ehud, the son of Gera, was appointed to go with it. He was a left-handed man; and having a design either to free his country from this oppression, or perish in the attempt, he had for this purpose provided himself with a poniard, which he concealed on his right side. After he had delivered the present, pretending he had something of great importance to communicate to the King, he obtained a private audience of him; when, taking his opportunity, he stabbed him with the poniard to the heart; and so shutting the door after him, had time to make his escape. For as the king was a very corpulent man, his attendants supposed that he was either reposing or easing himself, and therefore forbore to enter into his apartment, until Ehud was quite gone. As soon as he came to Mount Ephraim, he gathered together the Israelites that lay nearest him; acquainted them with what he had done, and then securing the fords of Jordan, that none of them might escape, he fell upon the Moabites, and destroyed them all; so that, after this conquest, the

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

Ehud murders Eglon king of Moab, and rescues his country.

mind of it by *the elders of the congregation*. Josephus tells us, that it was celebrated thrice every year: And on this festival it might be a custom for the young women to go out into the fields, and there dance by themselves, which might give their ravishers the opportunity they wanted; *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

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eastern part of the land of Canaan enjoyed a settled peace † for the space of fourscore years.

But though the eastern coast was at rest, yet the west parts of the kingdom were sadly molested by the incursions of the Philistines, who dwelt upon the same shore of the Mediterranean sea. Upon this occasion, † Shamgar, the son of Anah, asserted the cause of Israel; and having received extraordinary vigour from above, with no better weapon than an ox-goad, slew, at divers times, six hundred of these invaders, and preserved the peace of the country for eight years.

In

† There are two ways wherein *the land* (as it is in the text) may be said to have *had rest fourscore years*. If by the *land*, we understand the whole kingdom of Israel, the meaning must be, that it rested about fourscore years, or the greatest part of fourscore years: Because it is a very common thing in Scripture, to use numbers in this latitude, and instead of a minute computation, to make mention of the round sum. Thus the Israelites are said to *bear their iniquities forty years in the wilderness*, Numb. xiv. 33. when there wanted almost two years or that number; and to *dwell in Egypt four hundred and thirty*, when, strictly speaking, there wanted several of it: And, in like manner, the land is here said to *have had rest fourscore years*, when it is declared, at the same time, that the people served the king of Moab eighteen of them; nor is it any uncommon thing, in other authors, as well as the sacred, to use this form of expression. But 2dly, If by the *land*, we understand only such or such a part of it, the solution is easy. For it is but supposing that there were scarce any of the judges who ruled over the whole country of Israel, but some in one part, and some in another; so that, at the same time, there were several judges in the land, and peace in one part, where there was war in another; and then we may (with the learned Sir John Marsham) understand here by *the land which had rest fourscore years*, not the whole land of Israel, but the eastern part of it only, which had shaken off the yoke of Moab, while, in the mean time, the Philistines invaded the western parts, even as Jabin afflicted the northern, as we may see in the following chapter; *Pool's Annotations*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Of what tribe this valiant person was, we are no where informed; but it is not unlikely, that he was one of those tribes which bordered upon the Philistines, Judah, Dan, or Ephraim, because what he did, was against them. It is disputed by some, whether he is to be reckoned among the number of the judges; but for this, I think, there is no foundation. The short account which the Scripture gives of him, is this:—

And

In the north parts of the country however, the idolatry, which Micah began, propagated apace; so that God, being highly incensed at the people's impieties, permitted Jabin, who, at that time, assumed the title of king of Canaan, and † had fixed his imperial seat at Hazor, to oppress them with great severity for forty years. This prince

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and Barak
conquer Si-
rah, the
general of
Jabin's for-
ces.

And after him (i. e. after Ehud), was Shamgar, the son of Anah, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad, and also delivered Israel, Judg. iii. 31. After Ehud was Shamgar, i. e. he succeeded him in the office of a judge, for this is the natural sense of the words; and *he also delivered Israel*, which is the very phrase whereby the judges are described. It is not said indeed from what oppressions he delivered them; but he is a deliverer who preserves a nation from being oppressed, as well as he who rescues them from an oppression when they groan under it. This in all probability, was Shamgar's case, who, when the Philistines invaded his country, gave them a repulse, with the loss of six hundred of their men, which was enough to discourage them from all future attempts. And indeed the great slaughter which he made among them, with a weapon, in all appearance so incompetent for the work, argues him to have been a judge, and possessed of a divine power, as much as Sampson was, who slew a thousand of his enemies *with the jaw-bone of an ass*; Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.

† It is very certain that Joshua burnt the city Hazor, and slew the king thereof, whose name in like manner was Jabin, which might possibly be the common name to all the kings of the country, as those of Egypt were called Pharaoh: But it seems not improbable, that this Hazor might be retaken, and rebuilt by its antient inhabitants, and that this king might be a descendent of the other. Some indeed interpret the words thus—That this Jabin was king of that part of Canaan which lay in the country where Hazor formerly stood, and whose seat then was at Harosheth of the Gentiles: For they understand this place to be mentioned in the text, as the dwelling place, not of Sisera, but of Jabin himself, whose general Sisera was. But there is no reason for this inversion of the order of the words, since the Canaanites might, between the time of Joshua and Deborah, find frequent opportunities (considering the corruption and idleness of the Israelites) to re-establish their antient kingdom in these parts, to rebuild their former capital, and to set up one of the old royal line to be their king; who (according to the common usages of those ages) retained one and the same name with his predecessors; *Well's Geography of the Old Testaments, vol. ii. c. 6.*

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had made Sifera (* an experienced soldier no doubt) general of his forces, wherein, besides great store of other military munition, there were nine hundred armed chariots, which terrified the Israelites to such a degree, that * several tribes, (a) despairing of relief, sat still under their oppression, and some of them were going (b) to transport themselves into other countries. For their enemies were so very cruel to them; that they durst not travel the common roads, nor dwell in villages, for fear of being murdered or plundered; and having no arms left to defend themselves, they were forced to retire to fortified places, and there live together, in the utmost consternation.

In the midst of this distress, † Deborah, the prophetess, a woman of great eminence, and who, for some time, had administered justice to the neighbouring tribes, sent to Barak, the son of Abinoam, a message from God, that he should get together ten thousand men of the tribes of Zulusun.

* This Sifera (as Josephus informs us) was a very great favourite of the king's, for the services he had done in reducing the Israelites, whom he worked upon several encounters, time after time, and would never give over the pursuit, till he brought them at last to be absolute slaves, and tributaries to his master; *Antiq. lib. v. c. 6.*

* This is the sense of those obscure passages in the song of Deborah: *For the divisions of Ruben there were great thoughts of heart. Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? Gilead abode beyond Jordan, and why did Dan remain in ships? Ashur continued on the sea-shore, and abode in his creeks, &c.; Jud. v. 15. &c.*

(a) Judg. v. 15, 16.

(b) Ibid. viii. 17.

† The words *prophet* and *prophetess*, are of very ambiguous signification in both Testaments: Sometimes they denote persons extraordinarily inspired by God, and endued with the power of working miracles, and foretelling things to come; and sometimes they are used for persons endued with special, though not miraculous gifts or graces, for the better understanding and explaining the word of God; and of this sort were the sons of the prophets, or such as were brought up in the schools of the prophets. As therefore we read nothing of any miraculous action that Deborah did, she perhaps was only a woman of eminent holiness, and prudence, and knowledge of the holy Scriptures, by which she was singularly qualified to judge the people, *i. e.* to determine causes and controversies among them, according to the word of God. For though Jabin oppressed them sorely, yet it was rather by rigorous taxations,

bulun and Naphtali, and march them to † Mount Tabor, whither Sisera, with all his numerous army, coming to give him battle, should infallibly be routed. Barak readily agreed to the motion, upon condition that the prophets would go with him: And so having mustered up all his complement of forces, they both went together, and posted themselves upon Mount Tabor. Sisera had soon intelligence of this, and, getting a powerful army together, he made hasty

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tions, than infringing their laws, which he still suffered to be administered by their own officers: And of this he might take the less notice, because the supreme judicature was exercised by a woman, from whose power and authority he thought there was no reason to apprehend any danger; though this certainly gave her an opportunity of endearing herself to the people, and made her, by this means, the fitter instrument to rescue them from oppression; *Pool's Annotations*.

† Tabor is a very remarkable mountain in Galilee, not far from Cadesb, in the tribe of Zebulun, and in the confines of Issachar and Naphtali. It has its name from its eminence, because it rises up in the midst of a wide champaign country, called *the valley of Jezreel* or *the great plain*. Josephus tells us, that the height of this mountain was thirty Stadia, and that on the top of it, there is beautiful plain of twenty stadia in circumference. By all which it appears how commodious a place this mountain was, to be the rendezvous of Barak's forces, since it stood upon the confines of so many different tribes, was not accessible by the enemies horses and chariots, and had, on the top of it, a spacious plain, where he might conveniently marshal and discipline his army. What modern travellers tell us of this mountain is much to the same purpose: —“ After a very laborious ascent, (says Mr. Maundrell), we reached the highest part of the mountain, which has a plain area at top, fertile and delicious, and of an oval figure, about one furlong in breadth, and two in length. This area is inclosed with trees on all parts, except towards the south, and from hence you have a prospect, which (if nothing else) well rewards the labour of ascending it; for it is impossible for the eyes of man to behold any greater gratification of this nature. The top of this mountain was anciently invironed with walls and trenches, and other fortifications, of which some remains are still visible; and, for many ages it has been believed, that here it was that our blessed Saviour was transfigured, in the presence of his three apostles, Peter, James and John, though some later writers have made a doubt of it.” *Calmet's Commentary; Pool's Annotations; and Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.*

marches

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marches from † Harosheth ; passed the * river Kishon ; and incamped at the foot of the mountain, in hopes of cutting off Barak's retreat. Upon this Deborah advised Barak not to stay till Sisera came up to him, but early next morning, to march directly down, and to fall upon him, with all the assurance imaginable of success. The Hebrew general followed her directions ; and coming down upon the enemy before they were aware, he charged with such fury, * whilst God, at the same time (by

† A place situated upon the Lake Semechon, in the Upper-Galilee, and is in Scripture called *Harosheth of the Gentiles*, because the people of several nations fled thither to be under Jabin's protection, when they heard that he had possessed himself of that country, and kept the Israelites out of it ; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii.

* This river rises out of Mount Tabor, and passing along the valley of Jezreel, (now the plain of Esdraelon), empties itself into the Mediterranean sea. Some geographers will needs have it, that this river runs two ways, partly westward into the Mediterranean, and partly eastward into the sea of Galilee ; but this is a thing incredible, and what is known of no other river in the world ; and therefore, if there be any thing in it, the matter must be this, — That from mount Tabor, (as it happens from many other hills,) there flow waters out of two of its sides, some shaping their course westward, to the Mediterranean, and others eastward, into the sea of Galilee : So that there are two spring heads, and two distinct rivers though both arising from the same mountain, and perhaps both called by the same name. But whatever becomes of the river that runs eastward, it is plain, from another passage, that the Kishon which is mentioned in Scripture, ran westward into the Mediterranean sea ; for when Elijah had convinced the people assembled together at Mount Carmel, that Baal was not the true God, he enjoined them to seize all his priests, and to bring them down to the brook Kishon their to be slain, 1 Kings xviii. So that the brook Kishon, which rises out of Mount Tabor, must run by Mount Carmel, which stands on the sea-shore : And as Carmel stands west of mount Tabor, the course of the river, which extends from the one to the other, must be so likewise ; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii. c. 6.

* Josephus relates the manner of God's interposition in this action, in the following words : “ The armies were no sooner engaged, but their arose a violent wind, with a most impetuous tempest of hail and rain along with a it. The storm, driving just in the face of the canaanites, made not only their bows and their slings useless, but their weapons likewise designed for close fight ; for they could not so much as open their eyes against the weather ; “ and

(by a driving storm of rain and hail in their faces), struck them with such terror, that they were nor able to stand before the Israelites, but were soon broken, and put to flight. The pursuit however continued all day; and as the night approached, the stars shone with an uncommon brightness, to give light to the pursuers; and the river Kishon, * being swelled with the hasty rain, drowned the pursued, and carried the dead bodies away towards the Mediterranean sea.

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Sisera, in the mean time, seeing his whole army broken and dispersed, quitted his chariots, and was making his escape on foot; when Jael, the wife † of Heber the Kenite, seeing him coming, went to meet him, and invited him

Jael puts
him to
death.

“ and their fingers were so benumbed with cold too that they
“ could not handle their arms. — In the conclusion, it came to
“ pass that the Canaanites army was broken, dispersed, and cut
“ to pieces: So that, betwixt those that fell by the sword, those
“ that were trampled to death under the horses feet, those that
“ were torn to pieces by the chariots, and those that fled away,
“ and fell into the hands of the Israelites in their flight, this prodigious army which (according to our author) consisted of thirty thousand foot, ten thousand horse, and three thousand armed chariots, was, in effect, totally destroyed; *Antiq. lib. v. c. 6.*

* Mr. Maundrell tells us, that in the condition wherein he saw this river, its waters were low and inconsiderable; but in passing along the side of the plain, he discerned the tracts of many lesser torrents falling down into it from the mountains, which must needs make it swell exceedingly upon sudden rains; *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem.*

† He was of the posterity of Hobab, the son of Jethro, father-in-law of Moses; and is here called a *Kenite*, because originally, he descended from those people who dwelt westward of the Dead sea, and extended themselves pretty far into Arabia Petræa. The word *Ken* (from whence they took their name) signifies a *nest*, an *hole*, or a *cave*; and to this the prophet Balaam might allude, when he addresses himself to them in these words: — *Strong is thy dwelling-place, and thou puttest thy nest on a rock: Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Assur shall carry thee away captive*, Numb. xxiv. 21. These Kenites indeed were some of the people whose lands God had promised to the descendants of Abraham; nevertheless, in consideration of Jethro, all that submitted to the Israelites were permitted to live in their own country. In Numb. x. 29. we find that Hobab was invited by Moses to accompany him into the land of Canaan; and, in

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him into her tent ; which he readily accepted, as apprehending no danger from her whose husband was his masters ally. The fatigue of the day had made him very thirsty, and therefore he intreated Jael to give him a little water ; but when instead of water, she had given him as much milk as he desired, and he had strictly charged her to deny him, in case that any body should inquire for him, he laid himself down to rest. No sooner was he well asleep, but Jael, taking an hammer, and a long tent-nail, set it to his temples, and struck with such a force, that it quite pierced through his head, and pinned him to the ground ; and when Barak, in pursuit of him, came that way, she called him in, and shewed him the place and posture in which his enemy lay.

Deborah
makes a
triumphant
song upon
the whole
occasion,

This victory, which was followed * with new successes every day, put an end to the oppression of the north for forty years. It proved the utter ruin of this kingdom of the Canaanites in Hazor : And, upon many accounts, was attended with so many signal events, that the prophetess Deborah thought it not amiss to compose a triumphant song in commemoration of it : wherein she magnifies the deliverance it wrought, by recounting the many calamities which the Israelites before laboured under ; acknowledges

all probability, he accepted the invitation. At their first coming, they settled themselves in the territories of Jericho ; but having contracted a particular friendship with the tribe of Judah, they removed with them into the country that fell to their lot, Judg. i. 16. Every family of them, however, did not so : for this Heber, we find, for some reasons that are not mentioned, had settled his habitation in the tribe of Naphtali, Judg. i. 11. The Kenites indeed, though they were proselytes, and worshipped the true God according to the Mosaic law, yet being strangers by birth, and so not pretending to any right or title to the land of Canaan, held it best policy, in those troublesome times, to observe a neutrality, and maintain peace as well as they could, both with the Israelites and Canaanites ; and upon this foot it was, that there was a peace with King Jabin and the house of Heber ; and that Sisera, in his distress, fled to Heber's tent for protection, and put confidence in the feigned civilities of his wife ; *Howell's History of the Bible.*

* Josephus farther acquaints us, that, immediately after this victory, Barak marched with his army towards Hazor, where he encountered Jabin by the way, and slew him ; and having killed the King, laid the city level with the ground, and afterwards governed Israel for a matter of forty years ; *Antiq. lib. v. c. 6.*

its proceeding from the same divine being, who descended in great majesty to give the law on Mount Sinai; calls upon all those who partook in the benefits of it, to join in the praises of its great Author; commends those tribes that came readily to the war, and upbraids all those who declined their country's service.

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During this forty years peace, the people again rebelled against God, and God took the punishment of them into his own hands, by sending upon them a grievous famine, wherein several were forced to remove into strange countries; and, among the rest, † one Elimelech, a man of Bethlehem, with his wife Naomi, and his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, went into the land of Moab to live. Elimelech died there, and his relict married her sons to two women of the country, whose names were Orpah and Ruth. About two years after this, Naomi's two sons died, and she resolving to return to her own country, desired her daughters-in-law to remain in Moab. Orpah, with tears, took leave of her mother; but Ruth could by no means be persuaded to part with her; and therefore she accompanied her to Bethlehem, where, by † her mother's art and contrivance, she so managed the matter, that she

The story of
Ruth here
inserted.

† The book of Ruth, which takes its title from the person whose story is there principally recorded, is properly an appendix to the book of Judges, and an introduction to that of Samuel; and is therefore not only placed between them, but supposed to be wrote by one and the same hand. Its subject is very different from the rest, and is therefore made a distinct treatise. It is indeed of so private a nature, that at the time of its being wrote, the generality of the people might have thought it not worth recording; but we Christians may plainly see the wisdom of God in having it done. It had been foretold to the Jews, that the Messiah should be of the tribe of Judah, and it was afterwards revealed farther, that he should be of the family of David: And therefore it was necessary, for the full understanding these prophecies, that the history of the family of David, in that tribe, should be written before these prophecies were revealed, that so there might not be the least suspicion of any fraud or design. And thus this book, these prophecies, and the accomplishment of them, serve to illustrate and explain each other; *Bedford's Scripture-Chronology*, lib. v. c. 5.

† The whole management of this affair is recorded in the book of Ruth, to which we refer our reader, having less reason to be prolix in a matter that concerns a private family only, and what had not been related in such a particular manner, but for the reasons that we have already assigned.

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The Midianites oppress the Israelites.

married Boaz, by whom she had Obed, who was the father of Jesse, and the grandfather of David, and from whom (according to the flesh) the Saviour of the world was lineally descended.

After the death of Deborah and Barak, the Israelites fell again into their old impiety, and were again given up into the hand of their enemies. The Midianites were a people situated on the east side of the river Jordan, whom the children of Israel, in their passage to the land of Canaan, (c) had almost totally destroyed; but it is not improbable, that some of that nation, saving themselves by flight into other countries, and after the Israelites were settled in Canaan, returning thither again, might, in the space of two hundred years, repossess the land where they dwelt before, and still retain the name of Midianites. These people, together with their neighbours the Amalekites, † and some other eastern nations, for seven years, kept the Israelites in such subjection, that they were forced to betake themselves to the mountains, and to dwell in dens and caves, and fortified places, from whence, as the spring came on, they stole out to cultivate and sow their land; but all to no purpose: For, towards the time of harvest, these enemies made inroads into the country, and having destroyed the increase of the earth, and killed all the cattle which fell into their hands, they then returned home, and left the poor Israelites nothing to support themselves withal. Upon this sore calamity, the people began to be sensible of

(c) Numb. xxxi. 7, &c.

† Though the Midianites were the principal people concerned in these invasions and inroads, yet, besides the Amalekites, they had other confederate nations, who are called *the children of the east*, Judg. vi. 3, 33. by whom we may understand the Amonites, and Moabites, as lying east of the land of Israel, if not the Ishmaelites, and others that inhabited the parts of Arabia. The children or people of the east, in Gen. xxix. 1. denote the inhabitants of Mesopotamia; but these seem to be too far distant to have any part in these incursions; and therefore since we read (Gen. xxv. 6.) that Abraham sent away the sons of his concubines, particularly the sons of Keturah, (one whereof was Midian, the father of the Midianites) eastward into the east country, it may not improbably be inferred, that by *the children of the east*, in this history of Gideon, are denoted the descendents of the other sons of Keturah, and of the other brothers of Midian, who had settled themselves in the eastern parts adjoining to Midian; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament.*

their

their apostacy, and to humble themselves under the afflicting hand of God; whereupon God † sent them a prophet, who reproached them sharply with their base ingratitude; but, at the same time, † sent his angel to Gideon, the son of Joash, who dwelt at † Ophrah, and was then threshing out his corn, in a private and unsuspected place, the better to conceal it from the depredation of the enemy.

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To him the angel signified the purport of his message, which was to acquaint him, that the Lord had made choice of him for the deliverance of his people. Gideon at first excused himself upon account of the obscurity of his family

God makes
choice of
Gideon for
their deliverer.

† Who this prophet was we have no manner of intimation given us. The Jews generally fancy that he was Phineas; but Phineas must by this time have been above two hundred years old, which far exceeded the stated period of human life then. St. Austin is of opinion, that he was the same with the angel which soon after appeared to Gideon; but it is far more likely, that God still continued other prophets among the Israelites, besides the high-priest, to put them in mind of their duty, and to call them to repentance when they forsook him: For, from the case of Deborah, who is said to have had the spirit of prophecy, it appears that, at least in extraordinary cases, God failed not to raise up such persons among them. It is remarked however of this prophet, (be who he will), that he gave the Israelites no hopes of the divine assistance, but only upbraided them with their sins. However, when he tells them that their calamities were occasioned by their idolatry, he plainly intimates, that if they would return to the true worship of God, he would again look graciously upon them, and deliver them; and accordingly we find, that the history of their deliverance immediately follows; *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

† That he was not a mere created angel, is plain from the incommunicable name Jehovah, which he assumes, and whereby he suffers himself so frequently to be called, Judges vi. 14. 16, 23, 24, 25. 26. And therefore the Jews, according to their Targum, which styles him *the Word of the Lord*, look upon this angel, not merely as an heavenly messenger sent from God, but as the Son of God himself, appearing in the form of an angel; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Gideon was of the family of Abiezer, of the tribe of Manasseh; so the Ophrah where he dwelt must be understood to be situated in the half-tribe of Manasseh, on the west-side of Jordan; and for this reason is styled *Ophrah of the Abiezrites*, (Judges viii. 32.). to distinguish it from another Ophrah that lay in the tribe of Benjamin; *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii. c. 6.

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and fortune; and when the angel urged the thing, he desired of him some token of the divine mission, and at the same time requested him to accept of a small entertainment from his hands. The angel seemed not to refuse the invitation, whereupon Gideon hastened, and having boiled a kid, and made some unleavened cakes, he spread a table and set them before him; but the angel ordered him to take them hence, and place them upon a rock hard by, and so pour the broth upon them, which, though it might seem a little strange, Gideon did; and as soon as the angel had touched them with the staff, that was in his hand, immediately there issued fire out of the rock, which consumed them, whilst himself, at the same time, vanished out of sight.

Convinced by this miracle, that it was a messenger from heaven who appeared to him, Gideon began to fear (as the notion then was) that he should not long survive it; but being assured by the angel (though then invisible) that no harm should befall him, he built a monument, which he called *Jehovah-shalom*, i. e. *the Lord of Peace*, in commemoration of this gracious interview; and being that night admonished in a dream to destroy the altar of Baal, and cut down the grove that surrounded it; to build an altar to God upon the top of this wonderful rock, and to offer a burnt-sacrifice to him with one of his father's bullocks, he readily obeyed: And taking ten of his father's servants with him, demolished the one, and erected the other by next morning; chusing the night to do it in, that he might meet with no obstruction. On the morrow, when the people understood that Gideon was the person who had put this affront upon Baal, they came and demanded him of his father, that they might put him to death; but instead of complying with their demand, his father's answer was, "That † if Baal was a god, it was his business, and not theirs, to avenge his own quarrel;" and from this answer (wherewith he appeased the

† It is generally supposed, that Gideon's father had been a worshipper, if not a priest of Baal: and therefore it is not unlikely, that he had at this time been convinced by his son that God had given him a commission to recover his people, and to begin with this reformation; and this made him appear so boldly in his son's cause, because he knew it was the cause of God; Poole's Annotations; and Patrick's Commentary.

tumult) Gideon ever after obtained the name of *Jerub-baal*, A. M. 2561, &c. Ant. Christ. 1443, &c.
i. e. *the opposer of Baal*.

About this time the Midianites and their company, passing over the river Jordan, came and incamped in † the valley of Jezreel; upon which Gideon being moved by a divine impulse, summoned all those of his own family to take up arms first, and then sent messengers to several adjacent tribes, exhorting them to shake off the yoke of the Midianites, and to join with him; which accordingly they did, and came in such numbers; that, in a short time, his army amounted to two and thirty thousand men, though small in comparison of the enemy's forces, which consisted of no less than a hundred and thirty-five thousand.

As soon as each tribe's complement of men was arrived, Gideon (being willing to satisfy them that he did not act this on his own head, but was the person appointed by Heaven to be their leader and deliver) desired of God to give them some token of his commission; and the token which he made choice of was,——That upon his laying a fleece of wool on the ground, † the dew might be upon the He vanquishes the Midianites, in what manner.

† The city of Jezreel (which gave name to the valley) belonged to the half-tribe of Manasseh, on the west of Jordan, and lay in the confines of that half-tribe and the tribe of Issachar, as appears from Josh. xix. 18. In the history of the kings of Israel, this city is frequently made mention of, where, by reason of the pleasantness of its situation, some of them had a royal palace, though their capital was Samaria. The vale of Jezreel (which, as we said before, is now called the plain of Esdraelon) is, according to Mr. Maundrell, of a vast extent, very fertile, but uncultivated, and only serving the Arabs for pasturage. But some have supposed, that the valley of Jezreel here mentioned, denotes some other lesser valley, lying between Mount Hermon and Mount Gilboa; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii. c. 6.

† He supposed that the dew which was distilled from heaven, was a divine gift, (as the Scripture after testifies), and therefore he desired that it might be directed by God, that though it commonly falls every where, by his extraordinary providence, it might now water only his fleece. Some are apt to think, that he chose a fleece for this purpose, not only because it was ready at hand, but the better to express how the land was shorn by the Midianites, even as the sheep had been by him; that when he begged the dew (as a sign of the divine favour) might fall upon the fleece, it was to represent the kindness of God to him; and when he begged it might fall upon the whole ground,

A. M. 2561, &c.
Ant. Christ. 1443, &c.
from Jud. i. to the end of Ruth.

the fleece only, and the earth round about it be dry, which accordingly happened; and then inverting the former manner, he desired that the fleece might be dry, while the ground all around it was wet, which accordingly came to pass likewise. Confirmed by these signs, that it was the will of God that he should enter upon action, Gideon marched directly to the camp of the Midianites, who then lay in the plain of Jezreel; but before he came thither, God rightly foreseeing, that, if this army conquered the Midianites, they would vainly impute it to their own courage or numbers, and not to his assistance, ordered Gideon to make proclamation in the camp, that whoever was diffident of the success of the undertaking, should have liberty to return home: Whereupon two and twenty thousand quitted the field, so that ten thousand only remained with him. It might be thought possible however, for these ten thousand to defeat the army of the Midianites; and therefore God, resolving that the glory of the whole victory should be accounted his own, ordered Gideon † to lead the soldiers down to the water to drink, where he would give him a signal what men were fit for his purpose, and what not; and the signal was this, — That they who † took up

ground, to represent his favour to all the people. But there is a farther reason why he might desire to have the miracle inverted: For as it is in the very nature of the wool to draw moisture to it, some might be apt to think, that there was no great matter in this; and therefore he requested of God a second miracle, which was contrary to the former; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Mr. Le Clerc is of opinion, that the sacred historian has omitted one circumstance, which, nevertheless, in the very nature of the thing, is implied, *viz.* that Gideon, when he led his men down to the water, did forbid them to make use of any cup or pot, or such like thing: For he thinks it incongruous (as well he may) that among such a number as ten thousand men, no one should be furnished with some drinking vessel or other. But then, had any of these been permitted to be used upon this occasion, the experiment could not have been made; *Comment.* in Judg. vii. 6.

† Interpreters are at a sad puzzle to conceive, for what possible reason God made a distinction between the soldiers who lapped water in their hands, and those that laid themselves down to drink. Some of the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that all, except three hundred, who lapped, had been accustomed to the worship of Baal, which they unwarily discovered by their kneeling to drink: But this is a groundless and far-fetched conceit. The notion of those who impute these three hundred

mens

up water in their hands, and lapped it, should go with him; but they who laid themselves down to drink, should be dismissed; which experiment reduced them to no more than three hundred.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
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These three hundred men he ordered to hold themselves in readiness, and to have every one a trumpet, a lamp, and an empty pitcher to conceal the light which the lamp would otherwise give; and while they were providing themselves with these, he took his servant with him, and went down to the enemies camp, where he heard a Midianite relating his dream to his companion, which the other interpreted in Gideon's favour; so that returning to the camp, he drew his men out, and dividing them into three companies, of an hundred men each, he came upon the enemy † in the dead

mens lapping, some to their sloth and laziness, and others to their timorousness, and the great fear they were in of being surprised by the enemy, is of no more validity: For though God, if he thought fit, might have employed the most dastardly among them upon this expedition, that the glory of the victory might entirely redound to himself; yet since we are told all the fearful persons were dismissed before, and since it but badly befits the character of the courageous to be lazy; this action of lapping is rather to be accounted a token of their temperance, and of the nobleness of their spirit, which made them so desirous to engage the enemy, that they would not say to drink, but (though they were very thirsty) contented themselves to moisten their mouths, as we say, with a little water; whereas the rest indulged themselves so far, as to drink their belly-full. But after all, the true reason and design of this method seems to be only this, — That God was minded to reduce Gideon's army to a very small number, which might very likely be done by this means. For as the season of the year was hot, and the generality of the soldiers weary, thirsty, and faint, it was most probable, that they would lie down, (as indeed they did) and refresh themselves plentifully, and scarce to be expected that any great number would deny themselves in this matter; *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Saurin's Gideon defeat les Midianites*.

† The expression in the text is, *in the beginning of the middle watch*: For though the Romans, in after-ages, divided the night into four watches, Matth. xiv. 25. yet, in the eastern parts, and in more ancient times, it consisted but of three, whereof the first began at six, and continued four hours. The second therefore is called the *middle watch*, and began at eleven; so that we may suppose, that it was some time after this, that Gideon alarmed the Midianitish camp; and the reasons why he chose this part

of

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

dead time of the night. The watch-word was, *the sword of the Lord and of Gideon*; and as every soldier had directions to do as their general did, they all broke their pitchforks, brandished their lamps, and sounded their trumpets together.

The Midianites, hearing so many trumpets, and seeing so many lights at once, supposed themselves to be attacked by a formidable army; and so rising in a fright, and mistaking their friends for their enemies, † they fell upon one another, until they had put every thing into the utmost confusion. By this means, Gideon having obtained an easy victory, sent to the rest of the army, who, upon his proclamation, had withdrawn themselves, some to pursue the routed enemy, and others to secure the passes of the river Jordan, in order to prevent their retreat.

And puts
their kings
and some
others to mi-
litary execu-
tion.

The passes however could not be all secured: So that some of the enemies troops having made a shift to cross the river, Gideon, with his three hundred men, pressed hard after them, while the other part of the army destroyed those who staid behind; and having taken the two Midianitish princes, † Oreb and Zeeb, they cut off their heads, and sent them to Gideon.

Gideon,

of the night to do it in, are obvious, because the trumpets would then seem to sound louder, and the lights to shine brighter, and so both increase the consternation of the enemy, and conceal the smallness of his own army; *Pool's Annotations.*

† There might be several reasons for their doing this:— Either because the night was so dark that they could not distinguish friends from foes; or because the thing was so sudden, that it struck them with horror and amazement; or because they suspected treachery, (as they might easily do, since the army consisted of several nations, Judg. vi. 3.), or because God had infatuated them, as he had many others on the like occasions; *Pool's Annotations.*

† As the language of the Ishmaelites, the Midianites, and the Amalekites, who dwelt in Arabia, was originally the same, because they all descended from Abraham their common father; so we may infer, that there was little or no difference in them at this time. *Oreb* in the Hebrew signifies a *crow*, and *Zeeb*, a *wolf*: and these are no improper words to represent the sagaciousness and fierceness which should be in two such great commanders. Nor was it an uncommon thing for great families, in ancient times, to derive their names from such like creatures, (hence the *Corvini*, *Gracchi*, *Aquilini*, &c. among the Romans), either as omens, or monuments of their undaunted courage and dexterity

Gideon, in the mean time, and his small party, were in full chase of two other princes of Midian, Zeba and Zalmunna: and when he came to Succoth and Penuel, two towns on the other side of Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, he desired of them some provision for his men, because they were faint and weary: but instead of giving him any refreshment, they ridiculed the smallness of his army; for which insolence he vowed to be revenged of them upon his return. Continuing his pursuit therefore, with his small fatigued party, he came up with the enemy at Kartor, where the two Midianitish kings, thinking that they had now sufficiently escaped, were regardless of all danger; but Gideon falling upon them unexpectedly, surprised and defeated them, and, having taken them prisoners, carried them in triumph with him into Succoth, where he executed the vengeance which he had threatened, by crushing the princes of that place to death under thorns and briars, killing the people of Penuel, and demolishing its fortifications. Zeba and Zalmunna, in their march, had laid all the country waste, and put many to the sword, otherwise Gideon was inclinable to have shewn them some mercy: but understanding, by their own confession, that they had slain his brethren at Tabor, he ordered his son Jether to fall upon them; but, as he was but a youth, and seemed a little timorous, † he himself dispatched them with his own hand, having first ordered them to be stripped of their royal ornaments, and their camels of their rich trappings and furniture.

dexterity in military achievements. But, after all, it seems every whit as probable, that these were only nick-names, which the Israelites gave these two princes of Midian, to denote their fierceness and rapaciousness of prey; *Bedford's Scripture chronology*, lib. v. c. 3.; and *Le Clerk's Commentary*.

† In ancient times, it was as much a custom for great men to do execution upon offenders, as it is now an usual thing for them to pronounce sentence upon them. They had not then, (as we have now) such persons as the Romans called *Carnifices*, or public executioners; and therefore Saul bade such as waited on him kill the priests; and Doeg, one of his chief officers, did it, 1 Sam. xxii. 17, 18. But the reason why Gideon would have had his son do this execution, was, that he might be early animated against the enemies of Israel, even as Hannibal is reported, when he was a boy, to have been incensed against the Romans; *Patrick's Commentary*.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

These great and glorious actions, in defence of his country's liberty, raised Gideon's name to such a height, that the people came, and voluntarily offered to settle the government upon him and his family; which he modestly and generously rejecting, and desiring only, as an acknowledgment of his services, to have the pendants or ear-rings taken in the plunder of the Midianites, given him, the people readily consented, and, over and above these, threw in the costly ornaments, and the robes of the kings, together with the golden † chains, which were about the camels necks. The whole amounted to a prodigious value; and of these rich materials he made an ephod, and placed it in the city of Ophrah, as a monument only of his victory, tho', in after-times, it came to be perverted to a bad use, gave occasion to a fresh apostacy, and proved the ruin of Gideon's family.

Abimelech
usurps the
government
of Shechem.

Gideon, while he lived, had several wives, by whom (in all) he had seventy sons, besides one by a concubine, † whom she named *Abimelech*. As soon as his father was dead, this Abimelech, who was a bold aspiring youth, tampered with the people of Shechem, the place of his nativity, and where his mother's family had no small interest, to make him their king. They, by his persuasions, were inclinable to do it; and, that he might not want money to carry on his design, furnished him with some out of the treasury of † their god Baal-berith, wherewith he hired

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† The word, which we render *chains*, is, in the original, *little moons*, which the Midianites might wear strung together about their camels necks, either by way of ornament or superstition, because they, as well as all other people of Arabia, were very zealous worshippers of the moon; *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

† What the name of his other sons were, we have no mention made in sacred writ; but the name of this one is particularly set down, because the following story depends upon it: and not only so, but his mother perhaps might give him this name, which signifies, *my father a king*, out of pride and arrogance, that she might be looked upon as the wife of one who was thought to deserve a kingdom, though he did not accept it: and it is not improbable, that the very sense of this might be one means to inflame the mind of her son afterwards, to affect the royal dignity; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The learned Bochart is of opinion, that the Baal here mentioned was the same with Beroë, the daughter of Venus and Adonis, desired in marriage by Neptune, but given to Bacchus; and that she gave her name to Berith in Phœnicia, where she was much worshipped,

a company of profligate fellows to attend him. With these he repaired to his father's at Ophrah, and having seized all his brethren, except Jotham, the youngest, who made his escape, he slew them all † upon one stone, and when he returned to Schechem, instead of meeting with detestation for this unnatural murder, was, in a general assembly of the people, electing their king.

When young Jotham heard of this, he went upon Mount Gerizim, which overlooks the city of Schechem, and from thence, in a parabolic speech, represented to † the

ped, and thence translated a goddess into other parts. But, tho' the word *Baal*, as he maintains, be frequently used in a feminine sense, yet it can hardly be imagined; but that the sacred historian, if he had been minded to express a goddess, might have found out some way of distinguishing her; might have called her, for instance, *Bahalab-berith, the Lady, or Goddess of Berith*, without making both the words of a masculine termination. And therefore the most simple and natural manner of explaining the name, is to take it in general for the god who presides over covenants and contracts, to whom it belongs to maintain them, and to punish all those that violate them. For it is to be observed, that the most barbarous, as well as the most knowing, the most religious, as well as the most superstitious nations have always looked upon God as the witness, as well as the vindicator of oaths and covenants; that the Greeks had their *Zeus Horkios*, as well as the Latins their *Jupiter Fidius*, or *Deus Fidius*, or *Fecialis*, whom they looked upon as a god of honesty and uprightness, always superintending in treaties and alliances. And for this reason not improbably, the house of their god Berith was the citadel, the arsenal, and the treasury of Shechemites, even as Plutarch informs us, that in the temple of Saturn the Romans reposit their archives and public wealth; *Bichart, Canaan, lib. ii. c. 17.*; *Pool's Annot. in loc.*; *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Baal-berith*; and *Jurieu, Histoire des dogmes et cultes, &c. part. 4. chap. 1.*

† This stone some will have to be an altar, which Abimelech dedicated to the idle Berith, and erected in the same place where his father Gideon had destroyed his altar before; and so they account that this slaughter of his sons was designed for an expiatory sacrifice of their father's crime in demolishing the altar and grove dedicated to that idol. But this is a little too far-fetched, tho' there is hardly any other reason to be given, why they should all be murdered upon one and the same stone; *Patric's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

† This is the first fable that we find anywhere upon record; and from hence it appears, that such fictions as these, wherein the most serious truths are represented, were in use among the

A. M. the people his father's modesty and self-denial, in refusing
 2561, etc. to have the government settled on him and his family,
 Ant. Christ. which
 1443, etc.
 from Jud. i. Jews, as they are still in the eastern countries, long before the
 to the end. time of Æsop, or any other author that we know of. Various
 of Ruth. are the reasons that may be assigned for the first invention of
 them; but these two seem to be the principal; 1. Because men
 would suffer themselves to be reprehended in this guise, when
 they would not endure plain words: and, 2. Because they
 heard them with delight and pleasure, and remembered them
 better than any grave or rational discourses.

The trees went forth on a time, to anoint a king over them, (so that anointing was in use two hundred years before the first kings of Israel); and they said unto the olive-tree, Reign over us. But the olive-tree said unto them, should I leave my fatness, where-with by me they honour God and man, (because oil was offered in sacrifice to God, and fed the lamps of his house, besides all the other uses wherein it was serviceable to man), and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig-tree, Come thou and reign over us. But the fig-tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, (an apt representation that content and fullness of pleasure, which may be enjoyed in a private life, and cannot without folly, be exchanged for the troubles and cares that men meet with in the managery of public affairs) and go to be promoted over the trees. Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, (a form of speech imitated by Heathen authors, especially by Virgil, (Georg. lib. 2.) where speaking of some generous wine, he terms it—mensis et diis accepta secundis, since wine, as well as oil, was used both in Jewish and Heathen sacrifices, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, (the meanest of all trees, good for nothing but to be burnt, and therefore fitly representing Abimelech, from whom the Shechemites could expect no manner of benefit, but a great deal of trouble and vexation), Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If, in truth, ye anoint me king, then come and put your trust in my shadow; (an apt emblem of Abimelech's ridiculous vanity, to imagine that he should be able to maintain the authority of a king, any more than the bramble could afford a shadow or shelter), and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon; (words that carry a lively image of Abimelech's ostentatious spirit, and menaces to take severe vengeance on the nobles of Shechem, such as the house of Millo, who had been chiefly instrumental in his promotion, in case they should desert him). This is the parable, and, in some measure, its interpretation. The only difficulty is, to know whom these trees are set to signify. And here, some have thought, that by
 the

which they had now conferred on one, as much inferior in virtue and honour to Gideon, and his lawful sons, as the bramble is to the olive-tree, the fig-tree, or the vine : And then expostulating the injury done his family, and upbraiding them with their ingratitude, he appeals to their consciences, whether they had done right or not, and denounces a curse against them for their siding with Abimelech in all his wicked deeds.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

Having thus delivered himself to the Shechemites, Jotham made his † escape to Beer, where he lived secure from Abimelech's rage ; and it was not long before his curse began to operate. For the people of Schechem, * growing jealous and distrustful of their new king, were for apprehending and killing him, which made him leave the place,

Their re-
volt from
Abimelech.

the olive-tree, we are to understand Othniel ; by the fig-tree, Deborah, and by the vine, Gideon ; for to the two former, they suppose the offer of the kingdom was made for the services done their country, and by them rejected, as well as by the last. But for this there is no authority ; neither is there any necessity in the explication of such fables, to assign a particular reason for every image that is drawn in them. It is sufficient if we can but hit off their main intendment, which, in this of Jotham, was to convince the Shechemites of their folly in chusing a man for their king, who was no more able to protect them, than a bramble was to cover other trees that should resort to it, under the shadow of its branches ; *Saurin's Dissertations* ; and *Patrick's Commentary*.

† This was a city, that stood on the northern frontiers of the tribe of Judah, which did not acknowledge Abimelech for king ; and therefore Jotham knew, that he might have sure refuge and protection there.

* In the text the expression is, *Then God sent an evil spirit, or spirit of discord, between Abimelech and the men of Schechem*, Judg. ix. 23. which, in Scripture, is an usual form of speech, and denotes not any positive action, but a permission only, or, at most, a direction from God. It is observed, however, that this manner of expression may possibly have given rise to some notions in the theology of the Heathens, when they suppose, that the furies are appointed by the gods to sow the seeds of discord among men.

Lustificam Alecto, dirarum ab sede fororum,
Infernisque ciet tenebris ; cui tristia bella,
Iræque, infidiæque, et crimina noxia cordi.

And a little lower,

Disjice compositam pacem, fere crimina belli:
Arma velit, poscatque simul, rapiatque juventus.

Virg. Æn. 7.
and

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

and escape for his life. As soon as he was gone, they set up another vile wretch, Gael, the son of Ebed, to be their governour. Under his protection, the people ventured out to reap the fruits of the earth, and having, upon this occasion, made themselves merry, they expressed their detestation of Abimelech, and none was more forward than Gael to speak contemptibly of him, and make his boasts what he would do with him, if he could but once catch him. Zebul, whom Abimelech intrusted with his concerns in his absence, gave him intelligence of all that passed, and advised him to come with some forces, before it was too late. Accordingly, he marches all night, divides his army into four parts, and early in the morning had beset the city. Gael, though a very coward, seeing matters reduced to this extremity, marched out with what forces he had, but was soon defeated and slain. Abimelech, next day, stormed the place, and killed all the inhabitants that came in his way; but some having betaken themselves to a fort belonging to the temple of their god Berith, he set fire to it, and destroyed them all together.

Who is killed by a woman at Thebez, by the fall of a large stone.

During these times of confusion, the town of Thebez, not far distant from Schechem, revolted; and Abimelech, being now flushed with victory, besieged and took it; but the inhabitants flying to a strong tower, he endeavoured to burn that, as he had done the other, but not with the same success. For, while he was encouraging his men, and helping them to set the gate on fire, * a woman threw down a piece

* Thus Plutarch relates, that Pyrrhus, at the siege of Argos was killed by a woman throwing a tile upon his head; but there is something more remarkable in Abimelech's death by a stone, because, as he slew all his brethren upon one stone, for him to die by no other instrument carried some stamp of his sin upon it. The manner of his death, however, puts me in mind of what the same author records of the Spartan general Lyfander, who fell ingloriously under the walls of Haliartus. "Thus he died, says he, but not like Cleombrotus, who was slain while he was gloriously making head against an impetuous enemy at Leuctra; not like Cyrus, or Epaminondas, who received a mortal wound, while he was rallying his men, and securing to them the victory. These great men died in their callings. They died the death of kings and commanders: whereas he, like some common soldier, or one of the forlorn hope, cast away his life ingloriously; giving this testimony to the ancient Spartans, that they did well to avoid storming of walls; in which the stoutest man may chance to

" fall

a piece of millstone upon him, which fractured his skull ; so that finding himself mortally wounded, he called to his armour-bearer to put an end to his life, that it might not be said, he died by the hand of a woman. Thus God, in his abundant righteousness, punished both Abimelech and the men of Schechem according to their deserts; and, within the space of three years after their crimes were committed, made them the instruments of each other's destruction.

A. M. 2561, &c.
Ant. Christ. 1443, &c.
from Jud. 1. to the end. of Ruth.

After the death of Abimelech, Tolah, the son of Puah, an eminent man of the tribe of Issachar, undertook the government, and continued in it for three and twenty years. He dwelt on Mount Ephraim, near the centre of the country, that the people might, with more convenience, resort to him for judgment ; and though there is not much recorded of him, yet he seems to have been a prudent and peaceable man ; raised up to reform abuses, to put down idolatry, to appease tumults, and heal the wounds which were given to church and state, during Abimelech's usurpation.

Tolah and Jair made judges : under the latter, the people apostatize and are oppressed.

He was succeeded by Jair, a Gileadite, of the tribe of Manasseh, the first governour that was raised up out of any of the tribes beyond Jordan, and who, in the main, seems to have been more solicitous to † aggrandize his own family, than to mind the concerns of religion. For, during his administration, the people not only worshipped

“ fall by the hand, not only of an abject fellow, but by that of “ a boy, or a woman, as they say Achilles was slain, in the “ gates of Troy, by the hands of the effeminate Paris ; *Patrick's Commentary* ; and *Plutarch's Comp. of Lysander and Sylla*.

† The reasons which the Scripture gives us to think, that he really did aggrandize his own family, are, 1st, Because he is said to have had thirty sons, that rode on thirty asses colts : For as, in those days, the Israelites had but few chariots, and were not allowed to keep many horses, the most honourable of them were used to be mounted on these creatures, which, in the eastern countries, were much higher, and more beautiful than they are with us. 2dly, *They had thirty cities, or villages, called after their own name, in the land of Gilead* For as we read that Jair, the son of Manasseh, went and took the small towns of Gilead, and called them *Havoth-jair*, (Numb. xxxii. 41. and Deut. iii. 14), so we may presume that this Jair, who was afterwards judge of Israel, recovered the places which his ancestor conquered, and perhaps added some more to them, that each son of his might have one ; *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

Baalim,

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Chriſt.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

Baalim, and Aſhtaroth, as they had frequently done before, but adopted the gods likewise of every neighbouring nation, of the Syrians, the Zidonians, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the Philistines; so that God being enraged against them, incited the Philistines and the Ammonites to invade them on all quarters in one and the same year. Nor did these people make their incursions only upon the tribes that were on the east side of Jordan, but passing the river, gave the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim, no small molestation, and by their sundry defeats, made them feel the weight of their power.

The Israelites, finding themselves not able to cope with such powerful enemies, grew sensible of their folly; and to recover the protection of God, renounced all their idols, and betook themselves to his service in good earnest; whereupon † his mercy returning with their repentance, he soon found out means to effect their deliverance.

Jephtha
delivers
them, and
vanquishes
the Am-
monites.

There was, at that time, in the half-tribe of Manasseh which settled on the east side of Jordan, a man of note among his people, whose name was Gilead, of the family of that Gilead, the son of Machar, to whom Moses gave the (d) the city of Gilead, from whence the family took their name. This man had by his wife several sons, and one † by a concubine, whom he named Jephthah; but

† This is the most remarkable repentance and reformation that we meet with in the history of the Judges; and it seems to be so serious, that in the times of those three governors who succeeded Jephtha, we read nothing of their relapsing into idolatry. And as their repentance was sincere, so the expression of the divine compassion towards them, *that his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel*, Judg. x. 16. is the strongest that we meet with; though every one knows, that the divine nature is not capable of grief, properly so called; but the meaning is, that he quite altered his former intention, and in much mercy, resolved, upon their repentance, to deliver them.

(d) Numb. xxxii. 29.

‡ Several Jewish doctors are of opinion, that the word *Zonah* may signify either *one of another tribe*, or *one of another nation*; and so Josephus calls Jephthah *ἑσὸς πρὸς τὴν μητέρα*, a stranger by the mother's side. It is to be observed however, that among the Jews, if such persons as were deemed strangers embraced the law, their children were capable to inherit among the rest of their brethren, Jephthah indeed complains of the hard usage he met with, but it was upon this occasion, when his country he found stood in need of him; for had he been unjustly dispossessed of his right of inheritance before,

but when his sons grew up, and their father was dead, they expelled Jephthah, as having no right of inheritance with them, so that he was sent to seek his fortune, and, at length, settled in the † land of Tob; where, being a man of great courage and bravery, he was soon made the captain of a small army, with whom he used to make excursions into the enemies country, and sometimes bring off rich spoils.

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The Ammonites had now raised a large army, with a design to invade the country of Gilead itself. The Gileadites, on the other hand, were resolved to defend their country, and, to that purpose, had got together what forces they could; but then they were at a loss for a general. Jephthah, they knew, was a man of courage and conduct, who had signalized himself on frequent occasions against the enemy; and therefore, in a full assembly of their chiefs, it was resolved to send him an offer of the command of their army. Surprised at this sudden change, and remonstrating a little their former unkindness to him, he consented at last to accept of the command; but it was on this condition, that if he happened to be successful in the war, they should establish him their governour for life, which they readily consented to, and solemnly ratified. Being invested with

before, we can hardly suppose, that a man of his courage and martial spirit would have sat down contented with his exclusion. It is not to be doubted therefore, but that he *was the son of an harlot*, properly so called. But then the question is, Why God should make choice of a person of his character for so great an instrument of his glory? To which it may be replied, 1st, That God has prescribed laws to men, but none to himself; and can therefore alter his dispensations as he pleases, according to the circumstances and exigences of things. 2dly, That as he chuses to act by second causes, he always makes use of such instruments, as (all things considered) are properest for his purpose, without regard to any blemishes, for which they themselves are not accountable: And 3dly, That he might purposely dispense with the law in this case, to shew, that those who are basely born, ought not to despond, but by a virtuous and good life, expect a share of God's blessing; *Howell's history, lib. iv. in the notes.*

† We read no where else of this country, which very probably was not far from Gilead, upon the borders of the Ammonites, in the entrance of Arabia Deserta; or perhaps it is the same with what is called *Ish-tob*, (2 Sam. viii. 6, 8.), which was in Syria, and so near the Ammonites, that they hired forces from thence, as well as from other nations, to fight against David; *Patrick's Com.*

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this power and authority, Jephthah sent ambassadors to the king of Ammon, to demand the reason of his invading the Gileadites; to whom that prince replied, that their land was his, and that the Israelites, in their passage from Egypt, had taken it from his ancestors, which he now intended to recover. Jephthah returned him by other ambassadors in answer, that if either conquest, or prescription conferred a title, they had a just right to the country they possessed, since they took it, not from them, but from the Amorites, and had, for three hundred years, been in quiet possession of it; but all would not do. The Ammonites were resolved upon a war, and Jephthah made all things ready to receive them: But before he took the field he * made a vow, that if he returned with victory, the first thing that came out of his house to meet him, he would certainly offer unto the Lord, which many think was the occasion of the sacrificing his own daughter.

And sup-
presses the
insurrection
of the E-
phraimites.

However this be, it is certain, that when he returned out of the country of Ammon, where his battles were fought with success, he met with some disturbance at home; for the tribe of Ephraim, not long after, passed the river Jordan, on purpose to pick a quarrel with him, because (as they pretended) he had not sent for them to join the army, and share in the victory. † At other times they had been noisy and clamorous enough, but now they proceeded so far as to threaten to burn his house over his head. Jephthah endeavoured what he could to pacify them with good words; but when he found that reasoning would not do, he fell upon them with his army;

* To make a vow was an act of religious worship, and in itself no way culpable; nay, not only the Jews, but other nations, looked upon it in this view: And therefore we find Livy so frequently telling us, that the Roman generals were wont to vow to Jupiter, or Apollo, or some other god, that if, by their help, they should prove successful, they would devote some part of the spoil they should take in the war to their use, or build temples and dedicate them to their honour; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Though Gideon had called the Ephraimites to assist in the pursuit of the Midianites, and had given them the advantage of plunder, and the honour of taking Oreb and Zeeb, two princes of Midian, prisoners; yet, because they were not called at first to the battle, they took upon them to reprehend him very sharply, which he, like a prudent man, took patiently, and pacified them with good words; *Howell's History*, lib. iv. in the notes.

and

and put them to flight : And being resolved to hinder them from giving him the like molestation any more, he sent and secured all the passes over Jordan in their way home ; so that, as fast as they came thither, if upon examination they owned themselves Ephraimites, they were immediately put to the sword ; if they denied it, they had † the test-word *Shibboleth* given them, which (if they pronounced it *Sibboleth*) discovered their country, and cost them their lives ; insomuch, that what in the field, and what on the banks of the river, no less than † two and forty thousand Ephraimites were slain.

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Thus Jephthah, having delivered his country from the attempts both of foreign and domestic foes, lived the remainder of his days in peace, and after the administration of public affairs, for six years continuance in all, he died, and was honourably buried in his own country.

He was succeeded by Ibzan of Bethlehem, who, after he had governed seven years, was succeeded by Elon, of the tribe of Zebulun ; and he, after he had ruled ten years, by Abdon, of the tribe of Ephraim, who ruled eight. Of these judges the sacred history says nothing.

† Nothing is more notorious than that the people of the same nation, who speak the same same language, differ very much in their pronunciation of it, in several parts of the country. In Palestine, the people in Galilee, and those that lived at Jerusalem, spake the same same tongue, and yet, in the time of Christ, the latter could tell St. Peter, that his *speech bewrayed him*, Matth. xxvi. 73. In Greece all spake Greek, and yet the Ionians, Atticks, Dorians, and Æolians pronounced very differently. And here, though the Gileadites and Ephraimites were all of one nation, yet the latter, we find, could not pronounce the latter *Schin*. There were doubtless therefore many other words which they could not frame their mouths to speak, as the Gileadites did, but this one was chosen, because it was fit for their purpose. For as *Shibboleth* signifies *floods of water*, the Gileadites, when they saw any Ephraimite appear, might put this test to him, and bid him say, *Let me pass over the water* ; Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries.

† This was a terrible slaughter for one tribe to make of another : But the Ephraimites seem to have deserved it, as a just punishment of their pride and insolence, in despising so great a man as Jephthah, who had saved all the people of Israel, and threatening to destroy his house after so glorious a victory ; in reviling their brethren likewise ; invading them without a cause ; and attempting to drive them out of their country ; Patrick's Commentary.

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1443, etc.
from Jud. 3.
to the end
of Ruth.
Samson's
parentage,
birth, and
juvenile
exploits.

remarkable, only that some of them had a numerous issue, which is mentioned to shew that the government, at that time, was not hereditary.

During the administration of these judges, the Israelites enjoyed a peace of three and twenty years continuance; but when they relapsed into their old impieties, God suffered the Philistines to invade and oppress them; whereupon Samson's valiant acts began to display themselves. He was the son of Manoah, † of the tribe of Dan, and of a mother, whose name we nowhere find in Scripture. This woman was a long time barren, and had no children; and therefore, when an angel appeared to her, while she was alone, and gave her assurances that she would be mother of a son, who was to be a † Nazarite

† As the tribe of Dan lay bordering on the Philistines, it was most exposed to their incursions and invasions; and therefore God, out of that tribe, chose Samson to be a scourge to them, and a revenger of his people, which is very agreeable to the prophecy of Jacob, when he blessed his sons, a little before his death: *Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, biting the heels of the horse, so that his rider shall fall backwards*, Gen. xlix. 17.

† A Nazarite was one who, under the Levitical law, either to attain the favour, or avert the judgments, or acknowledge the mercies of Almighty God, vowed a vow of particular purity, and separated himself (for so the word signifies) in an extraordinary manner, to the service of God. The time of this vow lasted usually for eight days, sometimes for a month, and, in some cases, for the person's whole life. During this time, the persons (for women as well as men might enter into this engagement) bound themselves to abstain from wine, and all strong liquors; not to cut the hair of their heads; not to come near a dead corpse, nor assist at a funeral: Nay, the matter was carried so high, that if any happened to die suddenly in their presence, the whole ceremony of this separation was to begin anew. After the time that their separation was ended, they were to offer such sacrifices as the law appointed, and then, being absolved from their vow by the priest, they might drink wine, and use the same freedom that other people did. Samson's Nazaritism (to which he was consecrated by his parents) was to last the whole term of his life; but his frequent intercourse with the Philistines, and the great havock, and slaughter that he so often made among them, would induce one think, that he had a particular dispensation exempting him from the observation of some of the foregoing rules. *Vid.* Numb. vi.; Patrick's and Le Clerc's Comment. upon it; and Calmet's Dict. under the word.

from

from his birth; to drink no wine or strong liquor; and
 † never have his hair shaved; upon her telling her husband
 these glad tidings, he requested of God to vouchsafe him a
 sight of the same heavenly messenger, which accordingly
 God granted him, and, when Manoah intreated the angel
 to accept of a small entertainment, which he chose
 rather to have converted into a sacrifice, Manoah made ready
 a kid, and wine for libations; and having placed them
 upon an altar made of stone, as the smoke of the sacrifice
 began to ascend, the † angel mounted up in the flame, and
 so disappeared.

At the time appointed the divine promise was accomplished, and the woman was delivered of a son, whom she named *Samson*. While he was yet a youth, the spirit of God began to appear in him, and to exert itself in some notable exploits and feats of activity, in what was called † the old camp of Dan, (lying between † Zorah and Eshtaal),

† Long hair was esteemed very much among the Jews; and such persons as were made Nazarites by their parents, and consecrated to God from the womb, were required to wear their hair long and uncut, because it was a token not only of beauty but of majesty and veneration; *Howell's History*, in the notes.

† Angels bodies, which the Platonists called *ὀχήματα*, or *vehicles*, are not subject to the laws of gravity, as ours are. After our Saviour's resurrection, the history of the gospel informs us, how immediately, and in an instant, his body could move from place to place; and therefore it is no wonder, that Manoah and his wife should discover the person that appeared to them to be an angel, by the manner of his ascension; *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

† This camp of Dan was probably the place where the Danites made their incampment, in their expedition and enterprise against Laish, Judg. xviii. 11.; for it is not at all likely that the Philistines, who had the Israelites, at that time, entirely under their subjection, should suffer them to have any standing camp, and this, by the by, is a good argument, that the story of Micah, and of the Danites expedition, was transacted before Samson's time, though the compilers of the Bible have placed it after; *Howell's History*, in the notes.

† Both these were towns in the tribe of Dan, whereof Zorah lay on the frontiers of Judah; and for this reason Rehoboam, upon the revolt of the ten tribes, seems to have kept this place, though lying in one of these tribes, and to have fortified it for a barrier-town, on that side of the kingdom of Judah; as he did also Aijalon, another town belonging to the same tribe; *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii. chap. 6.

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the place where he was born. When he came to man's estate, he fell in love with the daughter of a Philistine, who lived at Timnah; and though his parents did not so well approve of the match, because she was sprung from an idolatrous family, yet, such was their tenderness for their son, that they indulged his passion, and went both of them with him to † Timnah to treat about the marriage. As they were on their journey, and Samson was straggling a little from the company, all on a sudden a young lion came running at him with open mouth, but he took it, and slew it with as much ease, as if it had been a kid; and, some time after, as he passed that way, (which was when his father and mother went with him to solemnize his nuptials), he turned aside to see what was become of the lion's carcase, and to his great surprise, found a † swarm of bees, and some honey in it, which he took, and gave part of it to his parents, but did not tell them from whence he had it.

His marriage, slaying the Philistines, and burning their corn with foxes.

It was customary in those days to continue the nuptial entertainment for seven days, and, to do the bridegroom greater honour, his wife's relations had brought † thirty of their prime youth to bear him company, to whom (as the

† It is not improbably thought, that the place which is called Timnah, Josh. xv. 10. and Timnatha, Josh. xix. 43. was the same with this: It was assigned at first to the tribe of Judah, but afterwards to the tribe of Dan, and was, in all likelihood, the place whither Judah, the patriarch of the tribe that was called after him, went up to his sheep-shearers, Gen. xxxviii. 12.; *Well's Geography, ibid.*

† Bees are observed by Aristotle and others to abhor stinking smells, and to abstain from flesh; which has made some think it strange, that a swarm of bees should be found in the carcase of a lion: But it is no hard matter to suppose, that either time had consumed, or birds and beasts devoured all the flesh, so that nothing was left of the lion but the skeleton, in which the bees did not breed, (for the notion of insects breeding in that manner is now quite exploded), but only settle themselves, when they swarmed, as they have sometimes done in dead men's skulls, and in their tombs; *Bochart's Hieros part II. lib. iv. c. 10.* and *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

† During the time of the marriage-feast, which, for a virgin, lasted seven, but for a widow only three days, it was customary among the Jews, to have a chosen set of young men, whom the Greeks called *Paranymphs*, and the Hebrew *Scheliachim*, to keep the bridegroom company; as also a certain number

the manner then was), he propounded a riddle, † which if they could explain in the time that the feast lasted, he obliged himself to give them thirty suits of cloaths, and an equal number of shirts; but if they could not, they were to forfeit the like to him. The words of the riddle were, *Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness*: which so puzzled the young men, that they could not for their hearts devise what it meant; and therefore applying themselves to Samson's wife, what with threats, what with intreaties, they prevailed with her to get the secret out of her husband; which,

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number of young women were about the bride all this time. These young men were generally of the bridegroom's relations and acquaintance; but, at Samson's marriage, they belonged to his wife's family, and were sent, (as some of the Jews think), not so much to do him honour at the time of his nuptials, as to be a guard over him, lest he should make any disturbance, of which the Philistines were afraid, when they understood that he was a man of so much strength and might; *Lamy's Introduction lib. i. cap. 14.*; *Calmet's Dissert. sur les mariages des Heb.*

† This riddle which Samson proposed at his nuptials, is somewhat singular. As the men and women were not permitted to be together in these eastern countries, they could not amuse themselves with their conversation; and as they could not spend their time merely in dull eating and drinking, it is hence presumed that their custom was, in their computations and feasts, (as we find it afterwards among the Greeks), to propose questions and hard problems to be resolved, in order to exercise the wit and sagacity of the company; *Selden De ux. or. Hebr. lib. 2. c. 16.* But to as this riddle of Samson's, some people are apt to find exceptions. The opposition, they say, is manifest in the former part of it, but not in the latter; for weakness is opposed to strength, not sweetness, whose opposite is bitterness or sharpness. But Bochart has ingeniously observed, that these two words, *strong* and *sharp*, are oftentimes used promiscuously. For, in the Arabic language, the word *mirra*, which signifies *strength*, comes from *marra*, which signifies to be *sharp* or *bitter*; and so it is in the Latin, where *acer*, a *sharp man*, is as much a valiant man, one who eagerly (as we speak) engages his enemy, and (what is more) we find, in some of the best authors, this particular epithet applied to lions, — *genus acre leonum*, Ovid. Fast. And therefore the antithesis of the words is this, — *Food came from the devourer, and sweetness from what is eager or sharp*; *Patrick's Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

when

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when, with much importunity, she had done, she told it them, and they, at the conclusion of the feast, gave him to understand that they knew it. He told them, however, by whose information they had it, and, being desperately enraged, went down to † Askalon, a city of the Philistines, where having slain † thirty men, he gave their cloaths to those that expounded the riddle; but taking the thing very ill of his wife, he left her, and went down to his father's house, while she, in his absence, was married to one of the young men that had been his companions all the wedding-week.

As soon as his resentment was abated, and his anger appeased, Samson took a kid for a present to his wife, and went to her father's house, with a full purpose of being reconciled to her; but, to his great amazement, was denied admittance to her room, and told by her father, that, upon presumption he had quite forsaken her, he had married her to one of his companions, but had another daughter younger, and more beautiful, that was at his service. This answer was far from satisfying him; and therefore, imagining that the affront was not so much the act of his father-in-law, as the general contrivance of the Philistines, he turned about short, and vowed revenge, which he afterwards executed in the following manner.

† It is a city in the land of the Philistines, situated between Azoth and Gaza, upon the coast of the Mediterranean sea, about five hundred and twenty furlongs distant from Jerusalem. It is said to have been of great note among the gentiles, for a temple dedicated to Derceto, the mother of Semiramis, here worshiped in the form of a Mermaid; and for another temple of Apollo, where Herod, the father of Antipater, and grandfather of Herod the Great, served as priest. The place subsists to this day, but is now very inconsiderable. Some mention there is made of the wine of Askalon, and the cypress-tree, (a shrub that was anciently in great esteem, and very common in this place), but modern travellers say no such thing of it now; *Calmet's Dictionary under the word*; and *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii.

† It may well be questioned, upon what occasion Samson could meet with thirty Philistines, all cloathed in their new and best attire, even though we allow that he went with a disposition to pick a quarrel with them, and slay them; but then it is but supposing, that, at this time, there was a merry-making, either in the fields, or in the city, at some public solemnity, when great companies used to be gathered together, and appear in their best apparel, and the thing is done; *Patrick's Commentary*.

By some means or other, he got together a multitude of foxes, to the number of three hundred ; and, tying them two and two together by the tails, with a lighted torch between each pair, he turned them into the standing corn at different places, and so not only set the fields on fire, but the vine and olive yards likewise, insomuch, that the whole country was in a blaze. When the Philistines understood that it was Samson who had done this, in revenge to the affront in which his father-in-law had put upon him, they came in a body, and fired the house over his head, and so burnt him and Samson's wife together. This was a fresh provocation, for which Samson threatened to be revenged ; and, thereupon, without any ceremony, fell immediately upon them, and || slew a great number of them.

Samson being conscious to himself, that he must have highly provoked the Philistines by this last slaughter of them, took up his residence thenceforwards on the † top of

|| The words in the text, according to our translation, are, *And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter* ; Judg. xv. 8. But the words in the original will admit of this signification, *He smote them with his leg on their thigh, and gave them great hurts or wounds* ; and to justify this sense, a learned commentator supposes, that there was at this time, somewhere among the Philistines, wrestling-matches, and other rural exercises, to which every one was invited, and that Samson, among the rest, might go thither ; that there he threw great numbers of Philistines, who perhaps might value themselves upon their activity that way ; and, in the midst of the grapple with them, broke their thighs with a kick or twist of his leg. If this supposition be right, the phrase, *Crus femori impingere*, seems to be much the same with what the Greeks call σκελίζειν, or ἀποσκελίζειν for, though this kind of exercise grew into high esteem among the Grecians, who were so famous for their gymnastic sports ; yet, that wrestling was an exercise not unknown among the people of the east is manifest from Gen. xxv. 26. xxx. 8. and xxxii. 24. This our commentator offers but as a conjecture indeed ; but it seems much more feasible than the interpretation either of the Vulgate or Chaldee paraphrast ; *Le Clerc in locum*.

† This was a strong place in the tribe of Judah, as Josephus relates, to the top of which no more than one man could come abreast, and therefore easily defensible : by all this, however, and what follows in this history of Samson, it is plain that he had no commission from God, nor was moved by any extraordinary impulse to make o-

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of the rock Etam, which was in the tribe of Judah. Here-upon the Philistines came down with an armed force, and demanded Samson to be delivered up to them. The people of Judah fearing the consequence of this invasion, detached a body of three thousand men to Samson; who, after they had expostulated the injury he had done them in provoking their enemies so highly, told him, in plain terms, that they were come to seize, and deliver him up to the Philistines.

His killing
1000 with
a jaw-bone.

Samson submitted to have himself bound, (which was done with new strong cords), upon condition that they themselves would not side with the enemy against him; and so being brought to the place where the Philistines were encamped, they now thought they had him secure, and therefore ran out with joy to receive him. But as they came near him, he snapped the cords asunder, and happening to espy a fresh jaw-bone of an ass, he made use of that for want of a better weapon, and therewith slew no less than a thousand men; from which achievement, the place was afterwards called, either simply *Lehi*, i. e. *the jaw-bone*, or *Ramah-Lehi*, *the lifting up of the jaw-bone*. Fatigued with this fight, and being now excessive thirsty, in a place where no water was to be had, he made his supplication to God, and God immediately caused a fountain of delicious water to issue from an hollow rock adjacent to Lehi, wherewith Samson allayed his thirst, and was revived; and from this event, the place was called *En-hakkor*, *the well of him that prayed*, ever after.

Carrying a-
way the
gates of
Gaza,

After this action Samson made nothing of the Philistines, but went openly into * one of their cities, called *Gaza*, and took up his lodging in a public house of entertainment.

pen war (as did Gideon, Jephthah, and others, for the deliverance of Israel from the yoke of the Philistines, but only to weaken them and keep them in awe, that, out of dread of him, they might be less cruel in their oppression; and that this was all that God intended to do by him, is pretty plain from the words of the angel, Judg. xiii. 5. *He shall begin to deliver Israel*; Patrick's Commentary.

* This city was, by Joshua, made part of the tribe of Judah, but, after him, it fell into the hands of the Philistines, and was one of their five principalities, situated between Raphia and Askelon, towards the southern extremity of the promised land. The advantageous situation of this place was the cause of the many

ment. The governor of the place had soon intelligence of him, and sent guards to beset the house, and to watch the gates of the city for his going out next morning; but Samson being informed of this, rose in the midnight, and taking the two gates of the city, gate-posts, bars, bolts, chain and all, he laid them on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of an hill, † that looks towards Hebron, and there left them.

At length a more fatal adventure than any of these befel him: For Falling in love with a beautiful woman, named † Dalilah, who lived in the Vale of Sorek, which

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Falling in love with Dalilah, by whom he is betrayed, and delivered to the Philistines.

lay many revolutions to which it became subject. At first of all it belonged to the Philistines, but, in Joshua's time, was conquered by the Hebrews. In the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, it recovered its liberty, but was conquered by Hezekiah. It was made subject to the Chaldeans, when they reduced Syria and Phœnicia, and afterwards fell into the hands of the Persians. They were masters of it, when Alexander besieged, took, and demolished it. It afterwards rose again, but not near of the same magnitude, under the name of Majuma, which underwent as many vicissitudes as the former. The kings of Egypt had it for some time in possession; Antiochus the Great took and sacked it; the Almoneans, or Maccabees, took it several times from the Syrians; Alexander Jannæus, king of the Hebrews, destroyed it; Gabinius repaired it; Augustus gave it to Herod the Great; Constantine gave it the name of Constantia, with many independent privileges, in honour of his son; but the Emperor Julian destroyed, and deprived it of all; *Calmet's Dictionary*.

† The words in the text are, that *he carried them up to the top of a hill that is before Hebron*, Judg. xvi. 3.; but the word which we render *before*, does equally signify *in the sight of Hebron*; and therefore, since the distance between Gaza and Hebron is no less than twenty miles, it is more probable, that the hill where Samson left these gates, lay between the two cities, and in view of both, that the inhabitants of one city might behold them to their confusion, and they of the other, to their encouragement to hope for a future deliverance; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† It is certain, that Sorek was a place in the land of Judæa, famous for choice wines, as may be gathered from Gen. xiv. 11.; Isaiah v. 12.; and Jer. ii. 21. and lay not above a mile and a half from Escol, from whence the spies brought grapes for a sample of the fruitfulness of the country; but whether Dalilah, who is said to live here, was a woman of Israel, or one of the daughters of the Philistines, (who at this time were rulers in the country of Judah), or whether she was his wife, or an harlot only, is not ex-

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of Ruth.

lay in the tribe of Judah, he was so infatuated to her, that he lost all regard to his own safety. The princes of the Philistines, observing his passion for this woman, came and promised her † a round sum of money, if she would learn of him, and discover to them what might be the cause of this his wonderful strength, and † how he might be deprived of it. This she undertook to do; and failed not to employ all her art and solicitation to get the important secret from him. For some time he amused her with fictions, and made her believe, that his strength consisted sometimes in one thing, and sometimes in another; first, that binding him with bands made of green withs, then, that tying him with ropes that had never

pressed in her story. St. Chrysostom, and others, are of opinion, that he was married to her; but if so, some mention, one would think, there should have been of the marriage-ceremonies in this, as well as in his former wife's case: Nor can we think, that the Philistines would have been so bold, as to attempt to draw her into their party, and to bribe her to betray him into their hands, had she been his lawful wife. It appears indeed, by her whole behaviour, that she was a mercenary woman, who would do any thing to get money; and accordingly Josephus (*Antiq. lib. v. c. i.*) calls her a common prostitute of the Philistines; *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Pool's Annotations*.

† The princes of the Philistines, from their five chief cities, Accaron, Ascalon, Gaza, Azoth, and Gath, *1 Sam. vi. 17.* are supposed to be five in number, so that, if they made her a common purse (as we say) of five times eleven hundred pieces, or five thousand five hundred shekles of silver, it would amount to about three hundred and forty-three pounds fifteen shillings; *Howell's History*, in the notes.

† There is a good deal of probability in Josephus's manner of telling this story, *viz.* That while they were eating and drinking together, and he was caressing her, she fell into an admiration of his wonderful deeds; and having highly extolled them, desired him to tell her, how he came so much to excel all other men in strength. For we cannot suppose, that she came bluntly upon him all at once, and desired to know, (as it is in the text), *wherewith he might be bound and afflicted.* This had been discovering her wicked design against him at once, and defeating herself of an opportunity of betraying him; and therefore we must conclude, that the sacred history in this place, (as it frequently does elsewhere), gives us only the sum and substance of what Dalilah said to her paramour, without taking notice of all the cunning and artful speeches wherewith she dressed it up; *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

been used, and again † weaving his hair into tresses, and so filletting them up, would bereave him of his strength: But these were no more than mock stories, for, upon trial, she found that all this signified nothing; and therefore, betaking herself to all her arts and wiles, she complained of his falseness, and upbraided him with his want of love, since he withheld a thing from her which she was so impatient to know: And thus, by daily teasing and importuning him, she prevailed with him at length to tell her the secret, viz. that in the preservation of his hair (for he was a Nazarite from his birth) his strength and security lay.

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

There was something in his manner of telling her this that made Dalilah believe she had now got the true secret from him; and therefore she sent word thereof to some of the chiefs of the Philistines, who came and paid her the money they had covenanted to give her: And when she had cut off his hair, as he lay sleeping in her lap, they fell upon him, bound him, and put out his eyes; and having carried him to Gaza, they shut him up in prison, and made him † grind in the mill like a slave.

In

† We have followed in this passage (which indeed is a very obscure one) the notion of the learned Spencer, (De leg. Mos. rit. lib. iii. c. 6. dissert. 1.), concerning the hair of the Nazarite; but a learned commentator is of another opinion, viz. that Samson's hair, being very long, was interwoven with the threads and warp of a web of cloth. And to this purpose he supposes, that in the room where he sometimes slept upon a couch, there might stand very near a loom, wherewith Dalilah, (as the custom then was), at her leisure-hours, might work and divert herself, and that now, by his permission and connivance, she might take the locks of his hair, work it into the web, and to hinder it from being pulled out, secure it with an iron pin thrust into the beam, but that Samson, when he awoke, took the loom along with him, at his hair. And indeed, without some such supposition as this, we cannot very well tell what to make of his going away with the pin of the beam, and with the web, Judg. xvi. 14.; Le Clerc's Commentary.

† Before the invention of wind and water mills, men made use of hand-mills wherewith to grind their corn; and as this was a very laborious work, we find masters (especially in most comic authors) threatened their servants with it, in case of any delinquency. It was the work indeed of malefactors, as well as slaves; and therefore it seems very probable, that in this prison, where Samson was put, there was a public mill, as Socrates (Hist. Eccles. lib.

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.
His last ex-
ploit and
death.

In process of time, however, his hair grew again, and with it his former strength returned : So that, when several of the princes and nobility of the Philistines were met in a general assembly, to return thanks to their god † Dagon, for having delivered their worst and forest enemy into their hands ; and after they had feasted a while, and were now grown

lib. v. c. 18.) tells us there were several afterwards in Rome, in the time of Theodosius. So that from this, and some other circumstances,, we may learn, that the Philistines purpose was, not to put Samson to death, (even as they had promised Dalilah they would not), but to punish him in a manner (*viz.* with blindness, hard labour, and insults) much worse, and more intolerable than death itself ; *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

† The word *Dagon* is taken from the Phœnician root *Dag*, which signifies *a fish*, and accordingly the idol is usually represented (as the Heathens do Tritons and Syrens) in the shape of a woman, with the lower parts of a fish,—*desinit in piscem, mulier formosa superne.*—For this reason learned men have imagined, that Dagon was the samewith Derceto, which the people of Askelon worshipped, and near which place there was a great pond full of fish, consecrated to this goddess,, from which the inhabitants superstitiously abstained, out of a fond belief that Venus, having theretofore cast herself into this pond, was metamorphosed into a fish. The learned Jurieu is of another opinion, *viz.* That Dagon, whose termination is masculine, both in sacred and profane writings, is always represented as a male deity, and may therefore very properly be thought to be the Neptune of the ancients. The Phœnicians in particular (from whom both the Greeks and Romans borrowed their gods) living upon the sea coast, and by their navigation and commerce, gaining great advantages from that element, can hardly be supposed to want a deity to preside over it. Saturn, and his three sons, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, were their principal idols : And as Saturn was their Moloch, Jupiter their Baal, and Pluto their Baal-Zebub ; so have we reason to presume, that Neptune was their Dagon. This however will not hinder us from supposing, that there might be two deities, a male and a female, worshipped in the same country, and under the same figure or form : and that as the Pagan theology gives Jupiter a Juno, to be his consort in heaven ; and Pluto a Proserpine, to keep him company in hell ; so Neptune had his Amphitrite, to be the partner of his liquid empire in the sea. According to this supposition, the Dagon of Gaza or Ashdod must be Neptune, and the Derceto of Askelon, a few leagues distant, Amphitrite, the daughter of Doris and Oceanus. Nor can it be thought incongruous to suppose farther, that the universal god of the sea might, in one place be represented

grown merry, they ordered that this same Samson should be sent for, that they might have pleasure in ridiculing his misery, and making sport with his blindness, and accordingly Samson was brought. A large number of people was upon this occasion met together; and the building where the feast was celebrated had only two large pillars to support the roof. After the Philistines therefore had insulted Samson as long as they thought fit, he desired the boy, that led him, to guide him to one of those pillars that he might rest himself a little against it. The boy did so: And Samson, by this means, having laid hold of the two main supporters, the one with his right hand, and the other with his left, after a short ejaculation to God for the restoration of his former strength, he gave them such a terrible shake, that down came the house, and crushed no less than three thousand persons to death under its ruins, and Samson among the rest.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant Christ,
1443, &c.
from Jud. 1.
to the end
of Ruth.

† Thus died this hero, in the midst of his enemies, as he desired; and when his relations heard of his death, they sent and took away his body, † and buried it honourably in the sepulchre of his fathers.

The

sented as a male, (as at Ashdod), and in another (as at Askelon) as a female, to signify the fecundity of that element, which produces and nourishes so many living creatures: *Le Clerc's Commentary*; *Calmet's Dictionary*; and *Jurieu, Histoire des dogmes et cultes, par. iv. chap. 6.*

† It is made a question among the casuists and divines, whether Samson ought to have died in this manner, with a spirit of revenge and self-murder? St. Austin excuses him indeed, but it is upon the supposition that he was urged thereunto by the inward motions of him who is the great arbiter of our life and death; and St. Bernard affirms, that if he had not a peculiar inspiration of the Holy Ghost to move him to this, he could not, without sin, have been the author of his own death; but others maintain, that without having recourse to this supernatural motive, this action of his might be vindicated from his office, as being the judge and defender of Israel, and that he might therefore devote his life to the public good, (as some Heathens have merited the commendation of posterity by so doing), without having any thing in view, but the death of his enemies, and the deliverance of his own people; *Calmet's Dictionary*; and *Saurin's Dissert. sur divers exploits de Samson.*

† How the people of Gaza came to permit Samson's relations to come and take away his body, is not so obvious to conceive. In all nations

The OBJECTION.

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Chrif.
2443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end.
of Ruth.

JUDGES, according to the notion that one would have of them, should be men of great gravity and sedateness; not only regular and religious themselves, but zealous promoters of virtue, and severe avengers of all wickedness and impiety; well skilled in the knowledge of the laws of God, and impartial in the administration of justice: But instead of this, what do we meet with, in this history of their lives, but cruelty and perfidiousness, a profane neglect of the service of God, encouragement given to vice by their own examples, and such romantic accounts of some of their actions and adventures, as no human faith can swallow?

For what can we think of Ehud's left-handed doings, in assassinating Eglon, king of the Moabites, under the wicked pretence of having a message to deliver to him from God? And yet, it must be owned, that this was not near so base as Jael's inviting Sisera (who was then at peace with her and her husband) into her tent, and, in circumstances that would have moved another's compassion, knocking him on the head, for which she merited to have her name recorded in a triumphant song.

The faith of several of these worthies is highly commended (e) by the author of the Hebrews; and yet we find Barak refusing to obey the divine summons, unless Deborah would promise to go along with him; and Gideon requesting miracle upon miracle for the confirmation of his faith, though he had demonstration enough that the messenger came from God.

nations, there was formerly so much humanity, as not to prohibit enemies from interring their dead, nor did any of the Israelites join with Samson in his enterprizes; he stood alone in what he did: But this last slaughter which he had made among them, might have provoked them, one would think, to some acts of outrage even upon his dead body. It is to be observed, however, that instead of any acts of violence, they might perhaps be much humbled and mollified by this late disaster; and might fear, that if they denied him burial, the God of Israel, who had given him such extraordinary strength, in his lifetime, would not fail to take vengeance of them. And therefore, dreading his very corpse, they were desirous to get quit of it, (even as they were of the ark afterwards), and glad that any came to take such a formidable object out of their sight; *Patrick's and Le Clerk's Commentaries.*

(e) Heb. xi.

“ No

“ No man had certainly experienced more signal inter-
 positions of God’s goodness in his favour, than this ge-
 neral had done ; and yet how badly did he requite his
 gracious protector, in making an ephod, to be an instru-
 ment of idolatry, and a means, in after-ages, to alie-
 nate the hearts of the people ? And how implacable was
 his revenge, in crushing the princes of Succoth under
 thorns, and putting the inhabitants of Penuel all to death,
 merely for denying him some provisions, which, after
 all, he had no right to demand ?

A. M.
 2561, etc.
 Ant. Christ.
 1443, &c.
 from Judges
 i. to the end
 of Ruth.

“ But of all the men that judged Israel, commend me
 to Samson. (and yet he is recorded among the worthies
 of old), for a complete pattern of lewdness and immora-
 lity, brutal strength, and brutal passions. It was a feat,
 one would think, great enough (though Josephus makes
 no mention of it) for Shamgar to kill six hundred of his
 foes with an ox-goad only ; but what is this to the heaps
 upon heaps which Samson slew with the jaw-bone of
 an ass ; and to the waters which gushed out at the soc-
 ket of one of the teeth of the same jaw-bone, so very
 opportunely to allay his thirst ? A serviceable weapon
 this, both to destroy his enemies, and refresh himself !

“ It may favour of spite and malice perhaps, for him to
 set the country in a blaze, and burn down all the poor
 people’s corn, merely because his wife, whom he left
 first, had played the jilt, and betaking herself to another
 man ; but it would really raise one’s wonder to think,
 where he could possibly get such multitudes of foxes as
 would do the work : And though we should allow, that
 after his hair was grown again, he might have strength
 enough to pull down the house where the Philistines
 were feasting ; yet it seems hardly consistent with the
 rules of architecture, that a fabric, able to contain three
 thousand people, should have its whole weight support-
 ed by two pillars only.

“ The truth is, Samson’s character at best is but a rough
 and uncouth one ; and some things are said of his ex-
 ploits, that seem to exceed the bounds of probability.
 But the wonder of all is, how he comes to be called a
 judge of Israel, who, in all appearance, was good for
 nothing else, but to kill the men, and lie with the wo-
 men : And as easily may we conceive in what sense
 (f) *wine may cheer God, as how the Spirit of the Lord*

(f) Judg. ix. 13.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Chris.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

“ might *come upon him*, whose actions were so diametrical-
ly opposite to every motion of that blessed inmate.

“ It may well exercise our wonder again, why none of
these judges (whose office it was to reform all abuses)
set about the extirpation of idolatry. The princes of Is-
rael were certainly in the right (though Joshua in all his
wars never did it) in having recourse to the oracle of
God; and yet the instruments and offices of religion
seem to be strangely blended, when the Levite in Micah’s
house pretended to answer the Danites every whit as well
by a Teraphim, which was no more than a Pagan idol.
And though the other Levite, mentioned in this histo-
ry, might not have sufficient reason for cutting his dead
wife into pieces, and sending them about to every tribe;
yet certainly the Israelites acted a just part in espou-
sing the quarrel: And therefore we cannot conceive
why God should suffer the Benjamites, these bold con-
temners of all goodness, to be twice successful against
them. And when, in process of time, the other tribes
had got the better of them, it is still another paradox,
how their minds came to be so changed towards them,
as to stick at no means (neither rapes nor murders) to
recruit their tribe, and effect their restoration.

“ Without entering therefore into the odd story, which
is told of Boaz and Ruth, and by what a shameless con-
trivance the young widow drew in the old man to mar-
ry her, we may adventure to say, that, during this pe-
riod, the Israelites gave small proof of their being the
peculiar people of God; and that the rulers, whom he is
said to have raised up, were the very reverse of what they
should have been, (*g*) a terror to good works, rather
than evil, and promoters of wickedness and idolatry, ra-
ther than avengers, to execute wrath upon those that
were guilty of them.”

Answered
by shewing
the power
and authori-
ty of those
judges.

Judges, which, in Hebrew, are *Shophetim*, were a kind
of magistrates, not much unlike the Archontes, among
the Athenians, and the Dictators, among the Romans,
The Carthaginians, a colony among the Tyrians, had a
sort of rulers, whom they called *Suffetes*, or *Shophetim*,
much of the same extent of power; and Grotius, in the
beginning of his Commentary on this book of Judges, com-
pares them to those chiefs that were in Gaul, in Germany,
and in Britain, before the Romans introduced another form

of government. Their power consisted in a medium (as A. M. 2561, &c. Ant. Christ. 1443, &c. from Jud. i. to the end of Ruth.) it were) between that of a king and an ordinary magistrate, superiour to the latter, but not so absolute as the former. They were indeed no more than God's vicegerents, and every attempt to raise themselves to regal dignity was looked upon as an usurpation upon his right, who alone was to be considered as the sovereign of the Hebrews; and therefore we find Gideon refusing this supreme authority when it was offered him: (*b*) *I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you.*

The honour of these judges lasted for life, but their succession was not always continued; for there were frequent interruptions in it, and the people lived often under the dominion of strangers, without any government of their own. According to common custom, they were generally appointed by God. The gifts which he invested them with, and the exploits he enabled them to do, were a call sufficient to that office: But in cases of extreme exigence, the people made sometimes choice of such as they thought best qualified to rescue them out of their oppression, without waiting for any divine designation.

Their right extended so far, as to arbitrate in all affairs of war and peace, and to determine all causes; but then they had none at all to make any new laws, or lay any new taxes upon the people. Their dominion did seldom reach over all the land; but, as it often happened, that the oppressions which occasioned a recourse to their assistance, were felt in particular tribes or provinces only; so the judges which were either raised, or chosen to procure a deliverance from these grievances, did not extend their command over all the land in general, but over that district only which they were appointed to deliver.

In short, these judges were by their office the protectors of the laws, the defenders of religion, and the avengers of all crimes, especially of that of idolatry; and yet it must be owned, that these were men of the like passions and infirmities with others, and that the great advantages which, under God, they procured for the Israelites, did not exempt them from that frailty which is incident to all human things.

The sacred story indeed tells us, that (*i*) *the Lord raised up judges, which delivered the Israelites out of the hands*

(*b*) Judg. viii. 23.

(*i*) Ibid, ii. 16, 18.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

of those that spoiled them, *and that when he raised them up, he was with them*, i. e. he communicated to them gifts, both natural and supernatural, according to the exigencies of his people, and, in all their encounters with their enemies, attended them with a peculiar providence: But as well may we infer, that every general who fights the king of England's battles with success, should be a man of singular sanctity, as that those who were employed under God in that capacity, should lead lives answerable to their high character. The power of working miracles is not always accompanied with an holy life. Many, that shall say unto Christ, *(k) Have not we prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works*, by reason of the iniquity of their lives, shall find no acceptance with him. What wonder is it then, to behold some, both kings and conquerors, even while they ride in triumph over the vanquished foes, tamely led captive by their own passions; so that while we cannot but admire them for their military exploits, we are forced to blame and censure them for their private conduct?

To mention one for all. Samson, a person born for the castigation of the Philistines, and to be a pattern of valour to all succeeding heroes, forgot himself in the arms of a Dalilah, and to the passion he had for a base perfidious woman, sacrificed those gifts which God had bestowed on him for the deliverance of his church, and so, to all ages, he became a sad example of the corruption and infirmities of human nature. The like perhaps, in other respects, may be said of the rest of the judges: But then we are to remember, that they were persons under a particular œconomy of providence; that their conduct therefore is no direction to us, tho' their passions the Almighty might make use of (and therefore tolerate) for the accomplishment of his wise ends: *Howbeit they meant not so, neither did their hearts think so.* (l) as the prophet expresses himself upon the like occasion.

Fhud's
murder of
Eglon.

Whether it be lawful, according to the right of nature and nations, for subjects to rescue themselves from tyranny by taking away the life of the tyrant, and to recover their country, which has been unjustly taken from them, by destroying the usurper, is a question that has been much debated, and what, at present, we need not en-

(k) Math. vii. 22. (l) Isaiah x. 7.

ter into, for the vindication of Ehud's fact. It is the ob-
 servation of the learned (m) Grotius, that the authority of
 the king of Moab was never legitimised by any convention
 of the Israelites; and consequently that they were at liber-
 ty to shake off his yoke whenever they found a convenient
 opportunity. The only difficulty is, (n) whether a private
 man might make himself an instrument in effecting this, in
 the manner that Ehud did? But to this it is replied, that
 Ehud was no private man, but acted by a warrant and au-
 thority from God: And to this purpose, the history ac-
 quaints us, that (o) *when Ehud had made an end of offering*
the present which the Israelites sent to Eglon, he was upon
his return home, and had gone as far as the quarries which
were by Gilgal. The word *Pesil*, which is here rendered
quarries, most commonly signifies (as indeed it is in the
 marginal note, as well as the Septuagint and vulgate) *gra-*
ven images, which it is not improbable the Moabites had
 set up in this place rather than any other, in pure contempt
 of the God of Israel, who had for so long a time made Gil-
 gal famous by his presence in the tabernacle while it stood
 there.

A. M.
 2561, &c.
 Ant. Christ.
 1443, &c.
 from Jud. i.
 to the end.
 of Ruth.

These images when Ehud beheld, his (p) spirit was
 stirred with a just indignation within him; and therefore,
 proceeding no farther in his journey home, he dismissed his
 attendants, and went himself back with a resolution to revenge
 this affront to God, as well as the oppression of his people.

That this his return was directed by a divine impulse
 and instigation, is evident, I think, from the hazard of
 the enterprize he was going upon, and the many favoura-
 ble occasions that accompanied the execution of it. For,
 how could any man in his senses think that a single person,
 as he was, should ever be able to compass the death of a
 king, amidst the circle of his guards and attendants? How
 could he expect that an enemy, as he was, should be ad-
 mitted to a private audience? or that, if he should prove
 so lucky, the King should be so far infatuated, as to order
 all the company to quit the room? The killing the king
 must have been a great difficulty under these circumstances;
 but then his making his escape had all the signs of an im-
 possibility in it: And yet, without his escaping the design
 of delivering his country, must have been abortive. Upon

(m) De jure belli et pacis, lib. 1. c. 4. § 19. (n) Saurin's
 Dissert. sur Heglon tue par Ehud. (o) Judg. iii. 11. &c.
 (p) Patrick's Commentary.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

the whole therefore it appears, that nothing but a divine instinct could have given him courage to set about the thing; and therefore it was not all fallacy, when he told Eglon, that *he had a message from God unto him*, because God had sent and commissioned him to kill him: So that what he did in this case, he did not of himself, or from his own mere motion, but by virtue of an order which he had received from God, who had destinated this oppressor of his people to this untimely kind of death.

This seems to be the only way whereby we can apologize for Ehud, in a fact which by no means is to be made a precedent, and, without a divine warrant, is in no case to be justified. But as for the Holy Scriptures, wherein this action is related simply, and without either dislike or approbation, why should they suffer in our esteem upon that account, any more than Livy, Thucydides, or any other Heathen author, for recording the various transactions (and some of them full as base and barbarous as this) that happened in the ages whereof they treat?

It is a mistake to think, that every person whom the Scripture mentions, nay, whom the Scripture commends in some respects, should, in all others, be faultless and unblameable; and it would be a much greater imputation upon the truth and authority of these sacred records, if the people of God were all made saints, and no black actions recorded of them; since it is the received character of a good historian, "That as he should not dare to relate any thing that is false, so neither should he conceal any thing that is true."

And Jael's
murder of
Sisera con-
sidered.

There is something peculiar in relation to the fact of Jael, and that is the words of the prophets, in her triumphant song: (q) *Blessed above women shall Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, be; blessed shall she be above women in the tent*; which some look upon as a commendation of Jael, and consequently an approbation of the murder of Sisera: (r) But Deborah herein might only prophesy how and in what manner the Israelites would be affected towards that woman, by whose means (though not in the most commendable way) they had been delivered from a very dangerous enemy.

It is natural for us, when at any time we are rescued from an adversary, by whom we have suffered much, and have reason to dread more; it is natural, I say, for us to

(q) Judg. v. 24.

(r) Le Clerc's Commentary.

with well to the person by whose means he was taken off; nor are we apt to consider the action according to the measure of strict virtue, by reason of the benefit which accrues to us thereby. Deborah might therefore mean no more than what were the common notions of mankind in a case of this nature. But, even † admitting her words to be a commendation of the fact, we might very likely perceive several reasons for it; if we had but a knowledge of some circumstances, which we may reasonably suppose, though the Scripture has not related them to us. A. M. 2561, etc. Ant. Christ. 1443, etc. from Jud. i. to the end of Ruth. 9

It is certain, that the Kenites, descended from Hobab the son of Jethro, father-in-law to Moses, were (s) at first, invited to go with the Israelites into the land of Canaan, and were all along kindly treated by them. They indeed had no share in the division of the land, nor were they

† One of our annotators has another way of accounting for the commendation which is given to Jael in Deborah's song, and that is by giving up the divine inspiration of it. "It is not to be denied," says he, "but that there are some words, passages, and discourses recorded in scripture, which are not divinely inspired, because some of them were uttered by the devil, and others by the holy men of God; but mistaken: such is the discourse of Nathan to David, 2 Sam. vii. 3. which God presently contradicted, ver. 4, 5, &c. and several discourses in Job, which God himself declares to be unsound: *Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath*, Job xlii. 7. This being so," continues he, "the worst that any malicious man can infer from this place is, That this song, though indited by a good man or woman, was not divinely inspired, but only composed by a person piously minded, and transported with joy for the deliverance of God's people, but subject to mistake; who therefore, out of zeal to commend the happy instrument of so great a deliverance, might easily overlook the indirectness of the means by which it was accomplished, and commend that which should have been disliked. If it be urged, that the song was composed by Deborah, a prophetess, and must consequently be divinely inspired, the answer is, 1st, That it is not certain what kind of prophetess Deborah was, whether extraordinary and infallible; or ordinary, and so liable to mistake. But, 2dly, that every expression even of a true and extraordinary prophet, was not divinely inspired, as is evident from Nathan's mistake above mentioned, and from Samuel's error concerning Eliab, whom (for his outward stature and comeliness) he took to be the Lord's anointed." 1 Sam. xvi. 6th; *Poole's Annotations*.

(s) Numb. x. 29.

permitted

A. M.
2461, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

permitted to dwell in their cities ; yet they had the free use of their country, and were allowed to pitch their tents (as their manner of life was) wherever they thought fit for the convenience of their cattle, though generally they chose to continue in the tribe of Judah. By this means a strict friendship interfered, and a firm alliance was always subsisting between the Israelites and these people ; whereas between the Kenites and Jabin, there was no more than a bare cessation of hostilities ; and though Heber and they continued neutral in this war, yet it was not without wishing well to their ancient friends the Israelites, among whom they lived.

Now it is a received maxim among all civilians, That where two compacts stand in competition, and cannot be both observed, the stronger should always have the preference. An agreement, for instance, says Puffendorff, (*t*) that is made with an oath, should always supersede that which is made without one. It is but supposing then, that the two depending treaties were of these different kinds, and this will be a circumstance in favour of Jael ; but then, if we may suppose farther, that Jabin was a grievous tyrant, and Sisera the chief instrument of his tyranny ; this (*u*) (according to the opinion of some) will supply us with a full apology for what she did. “ For there are certain “ monsters in nature,” say they, “ in whose destruction all “ civil society is concerned. To do any thing to preserve “ them, nay to slip a proper opportunity of ridding the “ world of them, (whatever terms we happen to be under “ with them), is to be false to what we owe to the whole “ community, under the pretence of fidelity to a base ally. “ When matters are come to such an extremity, that we “ must fight with men, as we do with wild beasts, fallacy “ of any kind (which at other times is justly detested) may “ in some measure be then excused ; nor have they, who, “ in their dealings with others, are regardless of all laws, “ both human and divine, any reason to complain, if, up- “ on some occasions, they meet with a retaliation.”

Jael, when she took the hammer and nail in her hand, might have this perhaps, and much more, to say in her own vindication : but what absolves her most effectually with us, is, the declaration which God had made in

(*t*) De jure nat. et gent. lib. iv. c. 2. (*u*) Vid. *Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Saurin's Dissert. sur la deſaite de Jabin*.

favour

favour of the Israelites, by the wonderful defeat of Jabin's army, and the direction and impulse wherewith he excited her to dispatch his vanquished general. (x) Had she been left to herself, she would have been contented, one would think, to have let him laid still, until Barak, who was in pursuit of him, had come up, and surprised him. To fall upon him herself was an enterprize exceeding bold and hazardous, and above the courage of her sex; and therefore we may conclude, that if it was God who inspired her with this extraordinary resolution, she was not to be blamed (notwithstanding the peace between Jabin and her family) for being obedient to the heavenly impulse; because all obligations to man must necessarily cease, when brought in competition with our higher obligations towards God.

A. M. 2561, &c.
Ant. Christ. 1443, &c.
from Jud. i. to the end of Ruth.

Whoever looks into the catalogue of the worthies whom the author of the Hebrews enumerates, will soon perceive, that, as he is far from being exact in the order wherein he places them; so, by the faith for which he commends them, he means no more than a belief of what God told them, and ready obedience to his commands, whenever they were signified to them by a proper authority. Deborah was, at this time, a very remarkable woman, famous for the administration of justice, and determination of controversies among the people; but notwithstanding this, it would have been rashness in Barak to have gone upon so hazardous an undertaking without any farther assurance than this. He did not absolutely refuse to go, nay, he offered to go upon the first notice, and for this his faith is commended in Scripture; but then he was minded to have some farther conviction that this notice was from God, and of this he could not have a better proof, than if the prophetess herself would go and share with him the fate of the battle.

Barak's faith cleared.

The enemy was as formidable an one as ever the Israelites had to encounter. Nine hundred chariots of iron, when, (y) in times of greater military preparation, Mithridates had but one hundred, and Darius no more than two hundred in their armies, was enough to inject terror into any commander, whose forces consisted all of foot, and had no proper defence against these destructive engines. Good reason had he therefore to apprehend, that the people would not so readily have inlisted themselves into the pu-

(x) Scripture vindicated, part 3. (y) Le Clerc's Commentary.

A. M.
2561, etc.
Anc. Christ.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

blic service, had there not been a person of her character to appear at the head of it. She was a prophetess, and had received frequent revelations from God; and therefore, when the people saw her personally engaged in it, would be the apter to be persuaded, that the expedition was by God's appointment, and therefore, without all per- adventure, would be attended with success. And as Deborah's joining with Barak in the expedition might be thought a good expedient to raise a sufficient number of forces; so might it equally be thought a means effectual, both to prevent their desertion, and to animate them to the fight: And accordingly (z) Josephus tells us, "That when
" the two armies lay incamped, one within the sight of
" the other, the Israelites were struck with such a terror at
" the infinite odds of the enemy in numbers, that both
" general and soldiers were once upon the very point of
" shifting for themselves, without so much as striking a
" blow; but upon Deborah's assurance, that it was the
" cause of God, and that he himself would assist and bring
" them off, they were prevailed upon to stand the shock
" of the battle."

But there is one advantage more which Barak might more especially promise to himself in having Deborah's company in this expedition, and that is, that he might not want an oracle to resort to upon any emergency that might happen; because he was persuaded, that God, who, by her means, had put his people upon this enterprize, would not fail, by her mouth, to direct him in the management of it. And accordingly, in the grand point of all, *viz.* when it was the properest time to engage the enemy, we find the benefit which he received from her company and conversation: (a) *Up, says she, for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thy hand. Is not the Lord gone but before thee? So Barak went down from Mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him, and the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword.*

Gideon's
faith af-
firmed.

The faith of those persons whose actions are recorded in the Old Testament, and fame commemorated in the New, consisted (as we said) in a firm belief of God's declarations, and a ready obedience to his commands; and how can we account Gideon culpable in either of these respects? When the angel of the Lord, (or a person much

(z) Antiq. lib. v. c. 6.

(a) Judges iv. 14.

superiour

superiour, as some suppose) appeared to him, and brought him the news of God's having appointed him to deliver his people from the oppression of the Midianites, he seems indeed at first to be willing to decline the office, as conscious of his own incapacity; but desires withal to have some conviction given him, (as who, upon the like occasion, would not have desired some?), that the messenger came from heaven, and was in reality no impostor; but when once he was satisfied in this, he never pretended to dispute the divine command.

He knew very well, that when he pulled down the altar and grove of Baal, he must necessarily incense the whole country against him, and run the hazard of his own life; and yet, to do it more effectually, he took to his aid ten of his father's servants, and, that he might meet with no molestation, did it in the night. He knew very well, that when he sounded a trumpet, in order to form an insurrection in the country, and to raise some forces to assert his nation's liberty, the Midianites would interpret this as an open declaration of war, and come against him with an army as numerous as the sand on the sea-shore for multitude; but this he mattered not. He knew that two and thirty thousand men, when he had raised them, were but a handful, in comparison of the enemy; and yet, to see two and twenty thousand of these desert him all at once, and of the ten thousand that remained, no more left at last than bare three hundred; this was enough to stagger any one's mind, that had not a firm reliance on the word and promises of God. He knew, that 300 men, had they been all giants, and armed cap-a-pee with coats of mail, would not be able to do any great execution against so numerous a foe; but when he found, that instead of being armed, he was to attack the enemy naked, and instead of swords and spears, (as usual), his soldiers were to march in such a plight as was never seen before, with every one a light, a pitcher, and a trumpet in his hand; and, when they came up with their enemy, were to break their pitchers, flourish their lights, sound their trumpets, and, instead of regular fighting, were only to shout and roar, like so many men either mad or drunk; who but a Gideon, that had his faith confirmed by so many visions and miracles before, would have obeyed, and put in execution such orders as must have been thought wild, frantic, and absurd, had they proceeded from any other mouth but God's?

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

Well therefore might he be allowed to request a repetition, nay, a multiplication of miracles, who was to have the trial of his faith and obedience carried to such an extremity: But the truth of the matter is, that it was not for his own sake that he made this request. He had been sufficiently convinced by the fire's breaking out of the rock at the touch of the rod in the angel's hand, that nothing was impossible to God, and that the means which he directed, (how incongruous soever they might appear to men), would certainly not fail of their effect: But it was for the sake of his allies that had just now joined him in this expedition, that he sent up his petition to God, to have them likewise satisfied; and therefore we may observe, that when all the quotas were come up, and incamped together, then (very likely in the audience of the whole army) he requested of God, *(b) and said, if thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said, behold I will put a fleece of wool in the floor, &c.* It was for their sakes, I say, that the miracles were wrought, that they who were to share in so hazardous a war, and to destroy the army of the aliens with so small a force, nay, with no force at all, should have some assurance given them, that the God of Israel, who had so often promised their forefathers, that, if they would continue in his favour, *(c) one of them should chase a thousand, and two of them put ten thousand to flight*, was determined to assist them in this enterprize.

His punishing the Gargites vindicated.

If ever this promise was literally fulfilled, it was in this defeat which Gideon gave the Midianites: But the inhabitants of Succoth and Peniel, it seems, made but a jest and ridicule of it, for which they received a condign punishment; but of what kind their punishment was, commentators are not so well agreed. *(d)* The word in the Hebrew signifies *threshing*, and thence is generally inferred, that Gideon caused the principal men of Succoth, who had denied his soldiers provision in their distress, to be stripped naked, laid flat on the ground, † and a good quantity of thorns and briars heaped on them; that so, by cart-wheels, or other heavy carriages passing over them, their flesh

(b) Judges vi. 37. *(c)* Deut. xxxii. 30. *(d)* Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.

† This was the manner of threshing their corn in the eastern countries,

might

might be pierced and torn, and themselves tortured, if not quite crushed to death.

This was a punishment not much unlike what David inflicted on the Ammonites, after he had taken their city Rabbah; but the Ammonites, in my opinion, did not so much deserve it as these: For thus stands the case. Gideon was now in pursuit of two kings, who, after the general rout of their army, were making their escape with a party of five thousand men. Coming to two places in the tribe of Gad, who were Israelites as well as he, and equally concerned to have been venturing their lives for the public liberty, he is denied a small refreshment for his men, fatigued all the night with fighting for them, and without some recruit, in no condition to continue their pursuit: So that, as far as in them lay, instead of assisting their gallant countrymen, who had merited every thing from their hands, these Gadites took part with the enemy, and did what they could to facilitate their escape, by denying some relief to their weary pursuers. By the right of war, Gideon might have demanded this help from any nation, but much more from a people who were embarked in the same cause, and whose refusal of so small a boon had the aggravation of perfidy and ingratitude, as well as hard-heartedness, to inflame its guilt.

Nor was this all. His brethren the Gadites, not only refused him this common courtesy, but were very witty likewise, in making their jests and sarcasms upon Gideon. They upbraided him with the smallness of his army, and magnified the strength of his enemies, and thereby not only did all they could to discourage his men in their pursuit, but endeavoured likewise to have it believed, that that there was no interposition of God in gaining this victory, and that Gideon would never be able to accomplish it: And so, to their other vile qualities, they added insult and irreligion, a contempt of God, and a disparagement of the man *whom the Lord had made so strong for himself*. And therefore it is not at all to be wondered at, that Gideon, under all this exasperation, should chuse to bring the two captive kings (with whom they had upbraided him) in triumph to these two places, and then resent the affront which was done to God, as well as himself, by making a severe example of some of the chief offenders.

It is suggested indeed by some, that Gideon was as great an offender as any, in his making an ephod for the purpose of idolatry; but before we admit of so rash a censure,

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

A. M. 2561, etc. Ant. Christ. 1443, etc. from Jud. i. to the end of Ruth.

sure, we should enquire a little into the nature of this Ephod, and for what possible purpose it was at first made.

(e) An Ephod, we know, is a common vestment belonging to priests in general; but that of the high-priest was of very great value. This vestment however was not so peculiar to the priests, but that sometimes we find the laity (as in the case of David bringing home the ark of God) allowed to wear it: And therefore some have imagined, that the Ephod which Gideon made, was only a rich and costly robe of state, which, on certain occasions, he might wear, to denote the station he held in the Jewish republic. But if his intent was only to distinguish himself from others by such a particular vestment, how this could give occasion to the people's falling into idolatry, or any way become a snare to Gideon and his house, we cannot conceive.

Others therefore suppose, that the word *Ephod* is a short expression to denote the high-priest's breast-plate, together with the Urim and Thummim; and hence, by an easy figure, they are led to think, that to make an Ephod is to establish a priesthood; and thereupon conclude, that Gideon's crime, in making this ephod, was not to establish idolatry, but only to institute another priesthood, besides that which God had appointed in Aaron and his posterity: And to this purpose, they suppose, that he erected a private tabernacle, an altar, a mercy-seat, with cherubims, &c. that being now made the supreme governour, he might consult God at his own house, in such difficult points as occurred in his administration.

But, besides that it is not easy to imagine, that a man familiar with God, and chosen by him, as Gideon was, should, after so signal a victory as he had obtained, immediately apostatize, as he must have done, had he set up an oracle in his own house; there seems to have been no manner of necessity for it, because Shiloh (where the tabernacle stood) was in the tribe of Ephraim, which adjoined to that of Manasseh, whereunto Gideon belonged. (f) Nor should it be forgotten, that this Ephod was (g) set up in *Ophrah*, which place Gideon (h) quitted, as soon as he had resigned his public employ, and retiring to a country-house of his own, in all probability left this Ephod behind him: There is reason therefore to believe, that the

(e) Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries; Pool's Annotations, &c. (f) Patrick's Commentary. (g) Judg. viii.

27. (h) Ver. 29.

design

design of setting it up, was merely to be a monument of his remarkable victory over the Midianites, in like manner as other conquerors had done before him; only as the common custom was, to erect a pillar, or hang up trophies upon the like occasion, he chose rather to make an Ephod, or priest's habit, (perhaps all of solid gold), as a token that he ascribed this victory only to God, and triumphed in nothing so much, as in the reformation of the true religion by that means. This was an action of no bad intent in Gideon, though, in after-times, when the people began to return to idolatry, and had this fancy among others, that God would answer them at Ophrah, where this Ephod was, as well as his tabernacle in Shiloh, it was perverted to a bad purpose. But as this abuse arose from the mad caprice of the people, and not from any ill intent in Gideon, he is no more chargeable therewith, than Moses was with the idolatrous worship which the Israelites, in future ages, paid to the brazen serpent, which he, for very beneficial purposes, at first set up.

It is generally supposed, (*i*) that the sacred history has not furnished us with a complete catalogue of the several judges that governed Israel, from the death of Joshua to the reign of Saul; and that even of those whom it takes notice of, it relates nothing but what was most remarkable in their lives and actions: And yet, notwithstanding this conciseness, it is far more exact and instructive than the history of Josephus, to which (*k*) Scaliger seems to give a preference above all others. The fault of Josephus (as any one may perceive it) is this:—That he omits the account of several miracles which the Holy Scripture relates, for fear that other nations, to whom he writes, should think he gives too much into the marvellous, tho', at the same time, he makes no scruple of sacrificing the glory of God to his own private character.

For this reason it is, that (*l*) he says nothing of the angel's touching with the end of his rod the sacrifice which Gideon had prepared, and so causing fire to flame out of the rock, and consume it; nothing of the two signs which God was pleased to grant him, for the confirmation of his and his confederate's faith, exhibited in the fleece's being at one time wet, and at another dry; nothing of his zeal in demolishing the altar and grove of Baal, for which he

(*i*) Saurin's Dissert. sur Heglon tué par Ehud. (*k*) Proleg. de emend. temp. (*l*) Antiq. lib. v. c. 8.

A. M. 2561, &c. Ant. Christ. 1443, &c. from Jud. i. to the end of Ruth. drew upon himself the indignation of all the abettors of idolatry; and here, in the matter of Shamgar, he suppresses the circumstances of his slaying six hundred Philistines with an ox-goad, though this be the only remarkable action recorded of him, and what may, not improbably, be thus accounted for.

Shamgar's
valour with
the ox-goad.

In not many ages after this, we read that these very Philistines, with whom he had here to do, had disarmed the Israelites to that degree, that (*m*) none in their whole army, when they came to action, had either sword or spear; but only Saul and Jonathan his son; nay, that they would not so much as suffer a smith to live among them, for fear of their providing themselves with military weapons, but obliged them to repair to them, whenever they wanted to sharpen or repair their instruments of husbandry.

Now it must be allowed, that the Scriptures say nothing of any such reduction as this, in the days of Shamgar: But if such was the policy of the Philistines in the beginning of Saul's reign, why may we not suppose that it commenced some time sooner? This certainly the Scripture tells us expressly, that (*n*) *in the days of Shamgar, the highways were unoccupied, and the inhabitants of villages ceased*, by reason of the Philistines, who came and plundered the country, and carried off what booty they pleased, without molestation; and therefore it is not unlikely, that for want of some regular arms, (whereof the Philistines had stripped the Israelies), Shamgar might make himself a goad, so well contrived, that with it he could kill any man, without any manner of suspicion that it was made for that purpose, but only for common use: that, with this instrument he usually went to plough; and when, at any time, the Philistines made their inroads into his lands, he, with the assistance of his servants, (who perhaps were armed in the like manner), fell upon them, and, at several times, killed to the number of six hundred of them in the space of about twenty years. This is a fair analysis of the sense of the words; and where is the great incongruity of this? Or what indeed is there in the whole, that an ordinary master of a family, with his domestics about him, might not not do, even though we should not call in any supernatural strength to his assistance?

(*m*) 1 Sam. xiii. 20. &c. (*n*) Judg. v. 6, 7.

There is more reason, however, why we should have recourse to the supernatural aid of God in Samson's slaying a thousand of these Philistines; at one heat as it were, with no other weapon than the *jaw-bone of an ass*. (o) For though asses in Syria (as the learned affirm) are both stronger and larger than what we have with us, and their bones consequently better fitted for such hard service as this; yet it must be owned, that it was by the wonderful strength that God infused into him, and not to any aptitude of the instrument he made use of, that he was enabled to do all this execution, which is only incredible to those (p) that do not consider the power of God, who can raise our natural strength to what degree he pleases, and, at the same time, infeeble the spirits of those who oppose his designs, in such a manner, that they shall have no power to help themselves.

It must be owned however, that there are some circumstances in this transaction which might possibly intimidate the Philistines, and thereby contribute to facilitate the slaughter which Samson made among them. The people of Judah had now prevailed with him to suffer himself to be bound, and conducted to the Philistines camp: The Philistines, as soon as they saw him coming, ran out with joy to receive him, and very likely forgot to take their arms with them, as knowing for certainty, that he was safe enough now, and bound, as we say, to his good behaviour. But when, contrary to their expectation, they saw him first break the cords so easily and suddenly, and then coming upon them with such fury and vengeance, (q) it is not unlikely this might put them in no small confusion, and as they struggled about in their flight, gave him the opportunity of slaying them one by one; as he came up with them.

This, we must allow, is the highest instance of personal prowess that we any where read of; and yet profane historians inform us of other men, who, by their mere natural courage, unassisted by any divine power, (as the Scripture informs us Samson was), have made great havock among their enemies: For Flavius Vopiscus reports, that in the Sarmatick war, Aurelian slew forty-eight men in one day, and in several days * 950, which diminishes the wonder

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.
And Sam-
son's with
the ass's
jaw-bone,
accounted
for.

(o) Pool's Annotations. (p) Patrick's Commentary. (q) Ibid.

* Upon this occasion the boys made a song, not much unlike that which Samson made of himself, Judg. xv. 16. which, after a mili-

A. M.
2561 &c.
A. D. Chris.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

der of this achievement of Samson's not a little ; especially considering, that the Philistines, in their surprise, might think that this was all a trick and management of his conducters to get so many unarmed men into their power, and that they too were ready to fall upon them, and assist him, in case they should make any opposition against their champion.

The water
from the
jaw-bone,
how.

That Samson, after so long a fatigue, should be almost ready to * die with thirst, is no strange thing at all ; but the question is, how, in a place where no water was, he came to have this thirst allayed ! The Hebrew word *Ma'kes* does properly signify *the socket*, in which the great teeth in the jaw are fastened ; and from hence Bochart, among many others, endeavours to maintain by arguments, that God made one of these teeth to drop out of the jaw, wherewith Samson had done all this execution, and immediately a stream of water gushed out from thence : But with all due deference to the learning of so great a man, (r) it is somewhat strange, that he should not observe, (when he had this passage under consideration), that such a miracle as this

tary manner, they shouted in their dances. “ Mille, mille, mille, mille, mille, mille, decollavimus unus homo : Mille, mille, mille, mille, decollavimus ; Mille, mille, mille : Vivat, qui mille, mille, occidit : tantum vini habet nemo, quantum effudit sanguinis.” Vid. Patrick's Commentary.

* Josephus gives us a strange account of the reason of Samson's thirst, and what there is no manner of foundation for in the Scripture. “ Samson (says he) was so transported with the thoughts of this victory, that he had the vanity to assume the honour of the action to himself, without ascribing the glory of it to God's power and providence, as he ought to have done : But while this arrogant and overweening humour was yet upon him, he found himself seized with a violent parching thirst, which gave him to understand, that, after all his successes, he was but flesh and blood still, and liable to human infirmities. The sense of this disorder brought him to the knowledge of himself, and to a penitent confession, that the victory was God's, and that he was able to do nothing of himself without the divine assistance. He begged pardon for his past vanity and presumption. His prayers were not in vain : for immediately there gushed out of a rock, that was hard by, a stream of delicious water to relieve him in his raging in drought ; *Antiq. lib. v. c. 1.*

(r) Le Clerc's Commentary.

would

would be inconsistent with the words which follow : *(s) wherefore he called the name thereof, i. e. of the fountain of water which gushed out, En-hakkor, or the well of him that cried to God, which is in Lehi even unto this day.* A. M. 2561, &c. Ant. Chri. 1443, &c. from Jud. i. to the end. of Ruth. Lehi is here therefore the proper name of a place. This place had doubtless its appellation from this adventure of Samson's with the jaw-bone, and from this place God caused a spring to arise, that he might allay his hero's thirst. For it is incongruous to think, that the jaw of an ass, or any other creature, could have subsisted to the time when the author of this book of Judges lived ; or (if all this while none should have had the curiosity to take away this wonderful bone) that God should, out of the socket of one of its teeth, cause a stream of water to flow, by one continual, useless miracle.

It must then be a mistake in our version, to render the words, *God clave an hollow place, which was in the jaw,* when (according to the * sense of the ancients upon this place) they should be translated, *which was in Lehi.* For the truth of the matter is, that though this jaw be long extinct and gone, yet those who have travelled through this part of Palestine, do inform us, that in the suburbs of Eleutheropolis, where Lehi very likely stood, the fountain which arose upon this occasion, is still remaining, and called *the fountain of the jaw,* to this day.

But be that as it will, whether the water which refreshed Samson in this his distress came from the jaw-bone, or (as others think) from a cliff in a rock, or an hollow in the earth, the miracle is the same, though it may not be

(s) Judg. xv. 19.

* To this purpose we may observe, that the Seventy Interpreters, the Chaldee paraphrast, and Josephus in his history, make it to be a proper name of a place, whence the waters gushed out. The words in the Septuagint are *Καὶ ἔρρηξεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν ἐν Σιαγόνι, καὶ ἐξήλθεν ἐξ αὐτοῦ ὕδωρ, God clave an hollow place in the ground, which was afterwards called Lehi, or Siagon, and out of it issued water.* Josephus is quoted before, only he had these words farther, *ὅθεν ὁ Σαμψώνης ἐκάλει τὸ χωρίον Σαγόνα, which rock, (says our translator of Josephus) from the exploit of Samson, bears the name of a Jaw unto this very day.* And the words of the paraphrast are directly to the same purpose : So that it is much to be wondered at, how so learned and acute a man as Bochart, should overlook these sentiments of the ancients ; *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Christ.
3443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

Samson in
all points
not to be
vindicated.

improper (whenever we can by an easier interpretation) to take away occasion from those that seek occasion to disparage the oracles of God.

We are not however concerned to vindicate Samson in all his extravagant and outrageous actions; such as his marrying an idolatress, and then leaving her; his loving lewd women, and discovering the great secret whereon his all depended to a common prostitute; his killing some, and maiming others, who perhaps had never done him any personal injury; and setting the whole country on fire, to burn their corn-fields and vineyards, with many other things that might be alledged against him. All that we have to say is, that God raised him up to be a scourge to the Philistines, and that, had there not been some peculiarities in his temper, he had not been so proper an instrument in his hand; or that, had he not run himself so often into *præmunires*, he would not have had so frequent occasion to employ the strength which God had given him, in extricating himself from thence by the death and destruction of his enemies. Though therefore there was no fatality in making him of this unruly disposition, (for that he contracted himself), yet there was a wise direction of God's providence in making his rugged temper subservient to his purposes, and even out of his faults and enormities extracting the plagues and punishment of his foes; for (t) *surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, says the Psalmist, and the remainder of his wrath shalt thou restrain.* This we may lay down as a general reason for God's making use of so furious an instrument as Samson was, in the execution of his will: And now let us examine a little into the other inconsistencies which some pretend to espay in the sequel of this story.

Samson's
foxes ac-
counted for.

A certain anonymous author, † in a dissertation upon Samson's foxes, has solved the whole difficulty of

(t) Psal. lxxvi. 10.

† Mr. Bernard in his *Repub. des lettres*, Oct. 1707, p. 407. makes mention of a small treatise in 12mo, intitled *Dissertation sur l'aneſſe de Balaam, les renards de Samſon, la machoire d'ane*, &c. from whom I have extracted the author's sentiments, as Mr. Bernard has represented it; but could, by no means, meet with the book itself; and cannot therefore properly enter into an examination of the author's opinion: However, I thought convenient to make mention of it, because there seems to be something ingenious, as well as singular in it.

that

that piece of history, if we will but admit of his suppositions. He supposes, that the word *Schualim*, which we render *foxes*, should, with a little variation, be written *Schoalim*, which denotes *sheaves*, or rather *shecks of corn*; and that the word *Janah*, which, in our translation, is a *tail*, equally signifies *the extreme*, or *outermost part* of any thing. Thus, in an orchard planted in the form of a *quincunx*, the farthest tree is called *Zanab*; and, in like manner, the extreme or outside shecks in a field may be so called here: and then the sense of the words will be, "That Samson, at different places, set fire to three hundred shecks of corn, which stood in the out parts of the fields belonging to the Philistines, and so, by the fire's spreading from sheck to sheck, destroyed, in a manner, all their crop."

But without entertaining any novel interpretation, and which, upon examination, perhaps will hardly bear the test, we may adventure to say, that these three hundred foxes, which Samson is said to have caught, are not, even in a literal sense, so incredible a thing, nor so liable to ridicule, as some may imagine. For we are to consider, (as the learned (u) Bochart, from the account of several travellers, evinces), that the whole country, especially that part of it which belonged to the tribe of Gad, so abounded with foxes, that from them (x) several places took their names: that under the name of foxes may not improperly be comprehended a creature very much like them, called *Thebes*, which go in such herds, that two hundred of them have been seen together at once; that the manner of catching them was not (as we may imagine) by hunting only, but by snares and nets, as the abovementioned author plainly demonstrates; and that Samson did not do this alone by himself, in a day and night's time, but that, being assisted by his servants and neighbours, (as he was a man of considerable eminence in his country), he might possibly be some weeks in accomplishing his design.

His design however will not appear so romantic, if we consider what collections have been made of creatures much wilder and rarer than foxes: that (y) Lucius Sylla, when he was prætor, ordered to be shewn, on the amphitheatre, an hundred lions; Julius Cæsar, when he

(u) Hieroz. i. 3. c. 10. (x) Judg. i. 35. (y) Pliny, lib. 8. c. 16.

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

was dictator, four hundred; and that (z) the emperor Probus, at one spectacle, exhibited a thousand ostriches a thousand stags, an hundred Lybian, and a hundred Syrian Leopards, and an infinite number of other strange creatures: and why then should it be thought to be a thing so incredible, as to need the intervention of a miracle, (as some contend), for Samson, with the assistance of his friends, who might be let into his design, to get together, in some time, three hundred foxes, in a country that every where abounded with them?

Foxes (we are none of us ignorant) are very apt to do a great deal of mischief wherever they abound, and (a) therefore Samson might have this farther aim in collecting so many, viz. that thereby he might clear his own country of such noxious animals, and at the same time, that he very well knew, no creature could be more convenient for his purpose of annoying and detrimmenting his enemies. For as these creatures are very swift of foot, and have a natural dread of fire, they could not well fail (when once they were turned into it) of setting the standing corn in a blaze, and then, as they were tied in couples, tail to tail, this would make them draw one against the other, and so being retarded in their flight, and staying longer in a place, they would give the fire more time to spread itself, and make a conflagration universal.

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that the mustering up such a number of foxes, in order to burn up the Philistines corn, was neither a foolish nor impracticable thing, supposing Samson was at liberty to prosecute his revenge in this manner. But for his righteousness in this, and many of his other proceedings, we are (as we said before) noways accountable, unless his being considered as a chief among the Israelites, (whom God had raised up to annoy the Philistines, and in such methods as this, rather than open war, to weaken them by his personal valour and strength), may be admitted in justification of what he did. But to proceed.

Wherein
lay Sam-
son's great
strength.

(b) Whether Samson's hair was the physical, or only moral cause of his strength, needs not, I think, be made any question. For though plenty of hair may be some indication of bodily strength, yet since he that is naturally

(z) Apud. Vopis. in Probo. (a) Calmet's Commentary in Judg. xxv. (b) Calmet's Dictionary, under the word *Samson*.

strong becomes not less so by having his hair cut off, (though this was certainly the case of Samson), it must necessarily follow, that his hair was no natural cause of his strength, but that it was a supernatural and miraculous gift, not (c) perhaps always inherent in him, but only dispensed at certain times, when the Spirit of God came upon him. (d) It depended indeed on the covenant made between God and him, the sign of which covenant was his hair; and therefore when, in compliance to his harlot, he suffered his hair to be cut off, he broke the covenant with God, and forfeiting the spirit of strength and courage, was left to his own natural weakness, and so became an easy prey to his enemies. But having been now a considerable time in prison, wherein he was cruelly used, he began to repent (no doubt) of his folly; and therefore making fervent supplications to God for pardon of the violation of his Nazaritism, he renewed his vow, and so, being restored to the condition he was in before he lost the favour of God, his strength began to grow and increase, in proportion as his hair did.

A. M.
2561, *etc.*
Ant. Christ.
1443, *etc.*
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

When his hair was thus grown, and his strength returned, it is made a question, whether the house (as it is called in Scripture) which he pulled down, was the temple of Dagon, for whose honour this festival was appointed, or some other edifice?

That it was not a common house, is evident from the multitude of the people which it contained; and though the temples of the Philistines are supposed (e) by some to have been of the same figure and make with those in Egypt, *i. e.* a kind of a rotunda, flat-roofed, with a large portico without, and pillars within to sustain the building; yet this seems to be no more than a fiction, devoid of all authority, and accommodated to the purpose of solving this difficulty: It is not certain, that the Egyptian temples were built in this manner, and much more probable it is, that this house of their famous God Dagon was made of stone; and though it wanted no proper supports, yet it is scarce supposable, that in a structure of this kind, its whole weight should be supported by two pillars only, and these so very contiguous, that Samson could lay hold on them both at one time.

(c) Patrick's Commentary.
(e) Calmet's Commentary.

(d) Collier's Introduction.

A. M.
1561, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end.
of Ruth.

The form
of the house
which Sam-
son pulled
down.

The most general opinion therefore is, that this was a structure which the Philistines made use of (upon such occasions as this), built all of wood, and supported by wooden-pillars, in the form of the theatres which in after-times were in great request among the Romans. Towards the middle of this building, we may suppose that there were two large beams, upon which the weight of the whole structure lay; and that these beams were supported by two pillars, which stood in a manner contiguous to each other. So that, as soon as Samson had moved and unsettled these, down must the principals, and with them the whole building, come. The only remaining difficulty is, how a building made of wood, and supported by two pillars only, should be able to contain such a multitude of men and women? But whoever reads * Pliny's Natural History, will therein find a description of two theatres, built by Curio, capable of containing a much greater number of people than the Philistines are here said to be, and yet (what was a wonder much greater than the two pillars here) whenever they were turned round, (as they frequently were), to meet and make one amphitheatre, they both rested upon one hinge only, which, had it happened to slip, must have occasioned (as our author tells us) a much greater slaughter than what was at the battle of Cannæ; as, by the actual fall of an amphitheatre, built by Atilius, no fewer than fifty thousand persons, (as * Tacitus relates the story) were

* The words of Pliny upon this occasion are so very remarkable, that I thought it not improper to quote them. "Theatra
" duo juxta fecit amplissima e ligno, cardinum singulorum versatili
" suspenso libramento; in quibus utrisque, antemeridiano
" ludorum spectaculo edito, inter sese averfis, ne invicem obstreperent
" scenæ, et repente circumactis, ut contra starent; postremo jam die,
" descendentibus tabulis, et cornibus inter se coëuntibus, faciebat
" amphitheatrum, et gladiatorum spectacula edebat, ipsum magis
" auctoratum populum Romanum circumferens. Quid enim miretur
" quisque in hoc primum? Inventorem, an inventum? Artificem, an
" auctorem? Ausum aliquem hoc excogitare, an suscipere? parere,
" an jubere? Super omnia erat populi furor federe ausi tam infida
" instabilique sede—perituri momento aliquo, laxatis machinis;" *lib. xxxvi. c. 15.*

* The fall of this amphitheatre Tacitus relates in these words:
" M. Licinio, L. Calpurnio Coss. ingentium bellorum cladem æquavit
" malum improvisum. Ejus initium simul et finis existit.
" Nam, cœpto apud Fidenas amphitheatro, Atilius, quidam liber-
" tini

were killed, wounded, and maimed: which is enough, one would think, to silence the cavils of those who are apt to fancy that a building of such a capacity could not be so contrived as to rely only on two supporters.

And indeed all the other exceptions, which are usually made to Samson's character and conduct, are in effect no more than mere cavils, which arise in a great measure from an unacquaintedness with the idiom of the Hebrew tongue. For as, when in Jotham's parable, *wine*, is said (f) *to cheer both God and man*; the words *Elohim*, and *Anaschim*, may signify as well *high* and *low*, *princes* and *peasants*, i. e. all conditions of men do find themselves cheered and refreshed with wine; so when it is said, that (g) *the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson*, we are not to understand thereby, that he had any grace extraordinary, or sanctifying influences of the blessed Spirit communicated to him, but only that he was endued with wonderful courage and fortitude, an undaunted mind, and a supernatural strength of body at such and such times, which enabled him to do great acts, but made no alteration in his manners. And in like manner, when he is said to (h) *have judged Israel twenty years*, we need not infer, that he was the supreme magistrate in the republic, (for that very probably was Eli), but only that he was the chief man of war, whose valour was renowned, and who did many great and signal exploits, in order to rescue his countrymen from the oppression of their enemies, and to restore them to their former liberty: I say, in order to this, for he did not perfect their deliverance; only, by the several defeats which he gave them, and the great damages he did them, he infused into the Israelites such a spirit and resolution; that not many years after, they took up arms, and appearing in the field against

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.
from Judges
i. to the end
of Ruth:
Other ex-
ceptions
concerning
Samson.

"tini generis, quo spectaculum gladiatorum celebraret. neque
"fundamenta per solidum subdidit, neque firmis nexibus lig-
"neam compagem superstruxit, ut quoniam abundantia pecuniæ,
"nec municipali ambitione, sed in fordida mercede id negotium
"quæssivisset. Adfluxere avidi talium, imperitante Tiberio, pro-
"cul voluptatibus habiti, virilis et muliebris sexus omnis ætas,
"ob propinquitatem loci effusus, unde gravior pestis fuit, con-
"ferta mole, dein convulsa, dum ruit intus, atque in exteriora ef-
"funditur, immensamque vim mortalium, spectaculo intentos,
"aut qui circum adstabant, in præceps trahit, atque operit——
"quinquaginta hominum millia eo casu debilitata, vel obruta
"fuit;" *Annal. lib. vi. c. 62.*

(f) Jud. ix. 13. (g) Ibid. xiv. 6. (h) Ibid. xvi. 31.

A. M. 2561, etc. Ant. Christ. 1443, etc. them, defeated, and subdued them; so that, in all the days of Samuel, we hear of no farther molestation from that quarter.

The Scripture however furnishes us with a reason why idolatry was not abolished, and a thorough reformation of religion established, during this period: for it tells us, that (i) *in those days*, viz. between the death of Joshua and the first institution of the Judges, *there was no king*, i. e. no chief ruler or magistrate (for the regal authority did not as yet begin) in Israel, *but every one did that which was right in his own eyes*; so that considering the natural propensity of the people to idolatry, and the want of a supreme power lodged in some one's hand to control them, we need not wonder, that before the institution of Judges, they fell into the like practices with the nations among whom they lived.

Why the judges did not abolish idolatry.

The Judges indeed were invested with authority to suppress these practices; but then we are to consider, that few or none of them had a jurisdiction over the whole land of Israel, but were only rulers of some particular cantons, which they undertook to deliver from imminent danger; and therefore how zealous soever they might be for a reformation, yet since their authority was not of sufficient extension, the wonder is not great, that (k) idolatry should still be practised in some dark corners of the land, and that in the tribe of Dan (which was so far distant) *there should be set up Micah's graven image which he made, all the time that the ark of the Lord was at Shiloh*.

Shiloh indeed was so far distant from several parts of the land of Canaan, that people began to account it too much trouble to go up thither to pay their vows and oblations, and therefore bethought themselves of setting up private chapels, wherein (as they supposed) they might serve God as well; and in the institution of these, being left to their own fancies, they generally intermixed some idolatrous practices; and, partly in imitation of the cherubims at Shiloh, and the teraphims among their Heathen neighbours, chose to worship God through some visible representation, which, by one means or other, was carried on in time to direct idolatry.

The Moabites, we know, even when the Israelites were in a state of independency, and had reason sufficient to have a jealous eye over them, by their arts and contrivances drew them into the worship of their god Baal peor;

(i) Judg. xvii. 6.

(k) Ibid. xviii. 31.

and

and much more might the nations, to whom they were now in subjection, succeed in their attempts, either of recommending, or (if need required it) of forcing their religion upon them : so that it was not to be wondered at, if things ran into such disorder, when there was (if not a total dissolution) at least a grievous relaxation of government ; when some of the governors themselves were far from being the best of men ; and, through inclination, intreaty, or compulsion, the people were so liable, upon many occasions, to relapse into idolatry.

A. M. 2561, etc. Ant. Christ. 1443, etc. from Jud. i. to the end of Ruth.

What Micah's intention might be in setting up a teraphim, and other kind of images in his house, commentators are not so well agreed. Those that are willing to apologize for the thing, are ready to say, (1) that as he lived in a time of great trouble and confusion, wherein the public worship of God was much neglected, if not totally disused, his design was to erect a kind of domestic tabernacle, wherein he might serve God in private, since he could not, without much difficulty, do it in public ; and that the sacred habiliments he made, his ephod, his teraphim, &c. were no more than what he had seen at Shiloh : but since the laws of God condemn (m) the making images of any kind, as objects of adoration ; the setting up any religious worship, different from what he had established ; the offering sacrifices, or (n) performing any public service any where but in the tabernacle ; and the employing any priests in his worship but such as were of the race of Aaron ; it is certain that Micah was guilty of a violation of all these prohibitions, and in the matter of these graven and molten images, cannot be excused from the crime of idolatry.

Micah's teraphim, and his intent in setting it up.

And indeed, unless he intended to patronize that, what reason could he have to make any innovations in religion, since (according as we date this action) either Phineas or Eli were then in the high-priest's office at Shiloh, where the public worship was preserved in all its formality, and from whence Micah, who lived in the mountains of Ephraim, was not so very distant, but that he might have gone thither upon all solemn occasions ;

The Spirit of God therefore, in repeating the admonition, that *in those days there was no king in Israel, &c.* before it begins to relate this story of Micah, seems to insinuate.

The answer to the Danites seditious.

(1) Calmet's Commentary. (m) Exod. xx. 4. and. xxxiv. 17. Deut. iv. 15, 16. (n) Lev. xvii. 8. and Deut. xxi. 14.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

nuate, that this was a wicked and enormous practice of his; that the worship he instituted was idolatrous, and the priest he had procured to officiate, a renegado: And if so, the answer this priest received in behalf of the Danites, and wherein he promised them the success they met with, must have proceeded from no good principle, unless we suppose (what seems indeed most reasonable) that the Levite promised them success, (because he was minded to please them) merely out of his own head, though, to give it a better sanction, he might pretend to receive it from this fictitious oracle. In this case, there was no occasion of having recourse to any oracle whatever; because any man of a moderate foresight, considering the undaunted courage and valour of the Danites, and the supine negligence and cowardice of the people of Laish, (if once they came to action) might, without the spirit of prophecy, foretell the event.

The directions which God gave Moses concerning Joshua's consulting the divine oracle, are conceived in these words:—(o) *He shall stand before Eleazer the priest, who shall ask counsel for him, after the judgment of Urim, before the Lord; at his word shall they go out; and at his word shall they come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.* In all the book of Joshua indeed we do not find, that he had this constant recourse to the oracle, (p) and from hence some Jewish doctors conclude, that he was bound to do this only at the first entrance upon his office, to demonstrate to the people that he was Moses's successor; but that afterwards the spirit of prophecy rested upon him, so that he knew how to conduct all public affairs, without having occasion for this oracular advice. Moses we know made no use of the Urim and Thummim, to consult God by the mediation of the high-priest; he went immediately and directly to God himself: But we do not read that Joshua was admitted to such familiarity, nor had he such frequent revelations from God, as his predecessor had. And therefore, as God was pleased, in supply of that defect, to remit him to this method of consulting him; we cannot but think, that upon every momentous occasion, especially in the weighty affairs of war, he was always careful to pursue it: And therefore the words, in the beginning of Judges, *Now af-*

(o) Numb. xxvii. 21. (p) *Kid. Patrick's Commentary in locum.*

ter the death of Joshua, the children of Israel asked of the Lord, ^{A. M. 2561, &c.} saying, *Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites?* do ^{Ant. Christ. 1443, &c.} not import, that they never consulted God by way of Urim and Thummim, during the life of Joshua, but rather, ^{from Jud. i. to the end of Ruth. 16} that after the death of so great a commander, they were at a stand what to do, nor would they adventure to proceed in the war of Canaan, without following the same directions which were given to Joshua, and which he had so long pursued with so good success.

Nay, the consulting of the divine oracle, especially in matters of war, was accounted so very necessary, in order to obtain success, that some commentators have esteemed this the only reason why the Israelites, in so just a cause as punishing the Benjamites, for their unheard-of wickednesses, were, in two several battles, defeated; even because they did not previously apply to God, as they should have done. (q) *They sent up indeed to the house of the Lord, and asked counsel of him, and said, which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin?* i. e. which of their tribes should have the honour or hazard of making the first attack: (r) But it is observable, that they had come to a full resolution of making war against the Benjamites, and, to that purpose, had made draughts of the men that were to be employed in it, without ever consulting God, whether an enterprise of this nature, wherein there was likely to be such an effusion of the blood of their brethren, would be pleasing to him, or no. (s) The truth is, they never questioned his approbation of what they accounted so laudable: They presumed upon his protection and assistance; and the vast superiority of their forces made them confident of success. But now, in a matter of such moment as this, to overlook the divine oracle, and be determined by their own counsels only, and to march against one of their own tribes, with a full purpose of destroyed them utterly, before they knew any thing whether God had decreed their destruction or no, was not only an instance of their rashness and presumption, but an act likewise of rebellion against the majesty of God, who was the king of Israel, and upon that account alone, had right to declare whether they were to wage war against their brethren the Benjamites, or no.

(q) Judg. xx, 18. (r) Calmet's Commentary sur Judges, ch. 20. (s) Saurin's Dissert. vol. iv, dissert. 18.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

Why the
Israelites
were so
were upon
the Benja-
mites

But supposing that the grounds of the war were justifiable, and God consenting to it, yet why might not he take the opportunity of punishing the Israelites, by means of the Benjamites, for their tame permission of crimes more enormous than what they had now taken into their heads to chastise; (t) for suffering spiritual adultery among them, even while they were so hot upon punishing carnal?

The laws which God gave the Israelites against the sin of idolatry, were so very severe, that whoever did but so much as entice another to the commission of it, was to lose all title to pity and compassion, though he was never so dear a friend, never so near a relation: (u) *Thine eyes shall not pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him; thy hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people.* But now, in the case of Micah, and the whole tribe of Dan, who had notoriously fallen into idolatry, the rulers of Israel were so far from putting this law in execution, that they connived at their apostasy: And therefore God took occasion, from this quarrel between the other tribes and that of Benjamin, to make use of the latter as scourges to punish this base connivance of the former; and after he had twice employed them to this purpose, he inverted the fate of the war, and, in so doing, made the confederate army of Israel the instruments of that terrible vengeance which he took upon the Benjamites, in the punishment of their execrable lewdness. For this is the wonderful wisdom of God's providence, to employ the passions of men to his purposes, and to make one wicked set of people the instruments of his punishing another, even as he expresses himself in another case, that in some measure is not incongruous to this: ——— (x) *Woe unto the Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand, is mine indignation. — Against the people of my wrath will I give him charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire in the streets. — Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few. — Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assy-*

(t) Patrick's Commentary on Judg. xx. (u) Deut. xiii. 8, 9.

(x) Isaiah. x. 5, &c.

ria, and the glory of his high looks ; and in like manner here, when, by the hand of the Benjamites, he had chastised the rest of the Israelites, by the hand of the Israelites he punished the Benjamites for their gross impieties, making use of their respective passions, and furious resentments, to accomplish his will ; albeit *they meant it not so, neither did their hearts think so ; but it was only in their hearts to destroy and cut off one another.*

A. M. 2361, &c.
Ant. Christ. 1443, &c.
from Jud. i. to the end of Ruth.

When the heat of their fury however was abated, and the Israelites began to look back with a little coolness upon what they had done ; how they had almost totally destroyed one tribe of their brethren, and bound themselves by an oath never to marry their daughters to any of the poor remains of it, (which could not but prove the extirpation of the whole), the joy and triumph of their late victory was turned into mourning and bitter lamentation.

Whether this oath against contracting any affinity with the Benjamites, was in itself lawful and obligatory, or no, (y) some interpreters, without any manner of reason, as I think, have disputed. For, whatever was attended with such pernicious consequences, as to oblige their brethren, either to live unmarried, which would prove the extinction of their tribe, or to marry the daughters of the Heathens, which was contrary to their divine law, or to take to themselves wives wherever they could find them by force and violence, which was contrary to the universal law of nations : Whatever, I say, was attended with such evil consequences as these, could not be lawful in itself, nor of any obligation to the consciences of those that made it ; and therefore it is somewhat wonderful, how the Israelites, when they found themselves involved in such difficulties, (as (z) they themselves testify), that for the preservation of this their oath, they were forced to have recourse to acts of the utmost cruelty and violence, did not perceive the illegality of it, and themselves, consequently, absolved from its observation.

The unlawfulness of their oath.

It is not the intent of the sacred historian to relate matters otherwise than they happened ; nor is it any part of our business, to apologize for actions that in themselves are abominable, and will admit of no excuse. The massacre of the people of Jabesh-gilead, without ever sending to

The murder of the Jabeshites.

(y) *Vide* Calmet's Commentary.

(z) Judg. xxi. 6. &c.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end,
of Ruth.

know the reason of their absenting themselves from the war, was a cruel expedient to extricate the Israelites from a difficulty in which their superstitious observance of an unlawful oath had involved them; and a sad instance it is of the iniquity and barbarity of these times: For how severe soever the laws of military discipline may be, or with (a) what justice soever recusants, as well as deserters in war may be deemed guilty, and the Jabeshites be called public enemies, because they did not obey the order of the whole congregation, and by refusing to join with them against the Benjamites, made themselves partakers of their crimes: yet certainly, to slay the innocent with the guilty, and to put women and children to death, who were never made to bear arms, was the very height of injustice and barbarity. If it be said, that the *Chorem*, or the sentence of utter execration was passed upon them, I do not see with what justice the virgins could be spared, (as we find they were by a public decree), unless we suppose that God, from the tabernacle at Shiloh, before which the Israelites were now assembled, signified his intentions of dispensing with the full execution of the sentence by reason of the public necessity.

The rape of
the virgins
at Shiloh,
not to be
defended.

And indeed the public necessity is the only good reason that can be given to that other act of violence, the rape of the virgins at Shiloh. For whatever may be said in vindication of the Benjamites, viz. that what they put in execution was by order and advice of their superiors, and that their intent in doing it was just and honest, and devoid of that brutal lust which is incident to common ravishers; whatever may be said in excuse of these, the elders of Israel, who gave them this counsel and authority, had certainly no right to dispose of other people's children without their parents consent and approbation.

* The rape of the Sabine virgins is usually produced
as

(a) Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries.

* This piece of history we find thus related: "Romulus, perceiving that his new city was surrounded by several powerful and warlike nations, who bore them no very good-will, formed a design to make them his friends, by contracting marriages with them: But considering with himself, that these neighbouring nations would hardly enter into affinity with a people, as yet famous neither for their riches, nor great exploits, without being in some measure compelled into it, he was resolved to put in practice the stratagem of his uncle
"Numitor,

as a piece of history parallel to this; (b) but Romulus, in whose reign it happened, was one of those princes who accounted every point that contributed to the establishment of his dominions, not only lawful, but glorious, and that every thing ceased to be a crime, when once it became necessary for reasons of state: but the rulers of Israel either had, or should have had different notions. They were governed by God, *whose throne is established in righteousness*, and should therefore, one would think, have contrived some other means of re-establishing a diminished tribe than those violent ways of rapes and forced marriages. But the sacred historian has assigned a reason for these unrighteous proceedings, when (in (c) four different places in the book of Judges) he tells us, that *in those days there was no king in Israel*; and (d) for want of such a supreme authority, every tribe, and every city, nay, which is more, every private man committed many horrid things, which were not publicly allowed. This (e) was the cause of Micah's ido-

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1443; &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

"Numitor, and to enter into this alliance with them by carrying off their daughters. This design he communicated to the senate; and having obtained their approbation of it, he proclaimed a public feast to be celebrated in honour of Neptune, and invited all the neighbouring cities to the many diversions and spectacles which he then intended to exhibit. Crowds of people, with their wives and children, flocked to the feast; but on the last day, when it began to draw to a conclusion, Romulus ordered all the young men, that, upon a signal given, they should seize and carry off every one a virgin, keep them all night, without offering any rudeness to them, and bring them the next morning before him. The young men took care to execute his orders: For, dispersing themselves into small companies, as soon as they saw the sign, they seized on the damsels, who upon this occasion, made a hideous outcry, as expecting worse usage than they met with. The next day, when they were brought before Romulus, he spoke very courteously to them, and told them. That it was to do them no dishonour, but merely to procure them husbands, that he ordered that rape, which was an ancient custom derived from the Greeks, and the most noble and gallant manner of contracting marriage. He therefore intreated them to be well affected towards those husbands which fortune had given them; and so, distributing the young women, which were six hundred and eighty-three, among an equal number of unmarried men, he dismissed them;" *Dionys. Halicarn. antiq. lib. ii. c. 21.*

(b) Saurin's Dissert. 18. vol. iv. (c) Chap. xvii. 6. xviii. 1. xix. 1.; and xxi. 25. (d) Patrick's Com. (e) Ibid.

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
in the end
of Ruth.

latry, as we noted before ; of the Benjamites filthiness and abominable lusts ; and of all the enormous things done by the main body of the Israelites ; their killing all the Benjamites without distinction ; their binding themselves by rash and unlawful oaths ; their killing all the women of Jabez-gilead, who were not virgins ; and here, their permitting, nay, their ordering this rape for the preservation of a rash and unjustifiable oath : And this should teach us to be very thankful for the authority that is set over us, in order to preserve us from the commissions of such like enormities ; for which end the custom was, among the ancient Persians, (as our learned Usher observes), to let the people loose to do even what they listed, for five days after their king died ; that, by the disorders which were then committed, they might see the necessity of having a king to govern them, and when one was settled in the throne, the great reason of being obedient to him.

Heathen
testimonies,
to corroborate
this
part of the
history.

Thus we have endeavoured to clear up most of the passages in the book of Judges, which seem to imply any inconsistency or incredibility, during this period : And if any Heathen testimonies may be thought a farther confirmation of their truth, we may say, that the seeming incongruity of Shamgar's slaying so many Philistines with an ox-goad is mightily abated, by what is told of Lycurgus, *viz.* that he overthrew the forces of Bacchus with the self-same weapon ; that from Deborah's being a prophetess, a governess, and dwelling upon a mount, the story of the Theban Sphinx (as some learned men imagine) was invented by the Greeks ; that their Hercules, was certainly the Samson of sacred writ, his Omphale and Dalilah the same, and that his pillars at Cales were of near affinity with those of Gaza ; * that his fatal locks gave rise to the fable of Nisus king

* The story is thus told by Ovid. Nisus was besieged by Minos in his capital city Megara. The fate of that city, which was the strength of his kingdom, depended upon a certain lock of red hair, which was concealed under the rest. The siege had now been continued for six months, when the daughter of Nisus, who had frequent opportunities of beholding her father's enemy Minos from a tower that looked into his camp, was so taken with his goodly mien and deportment, that she fell desperately in love with him. Her love, and the occasion of it, the poet has thus related.

—Hac

king of Megara, upon whose hair the fortune of his kingdom depended; that his foxes were commemorated at Rome, every return of their harvest, * by a similar ceremony of tying them tail to tail, and so letting them go;

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Clav.
1443, &c.
from Job. 1.
to the end
of Ruth.

————— Hac judice Minos,
Seu caput abdiderat cristata casside pennis,
In galea formosus erat; seu sumperat auro
Fulgentem clypeum, clympeum sumpsisse decebat, &c.
Cum vero faciem dempto nudaverat ære,
Purpureusque albi stratis insignia pictis
Terga premebat equi, spumantiaque ora regebat;
Vix sua, vix sanæ virgo Nisæia compos
Mentis erat: Felix jaculum, quod tangeret ille,
Quæque manu premeret, feliciæ fræna vocabat.

Metamor. lib. viii.

The result of this passion was, that this perfidious daughter stole into the chamber, while her father was fast asleep, cut off the lock whereon the fate of his kingdom depended, and carried it to Minos, as an undoubted pledge of her love. But if this fable and Samson's history have a near resemblance in some of their first circumstances, they are very different in the conclusion: For Minos rejected the present with scorn, and slighted the woman because of her perfidy; whereas the princes of the Philistines took the advantage against Samson, which Dalilah's treachery gave them; *Saurin, vol. iv. Dissert. 17.*

* There was anciently a feast in Rome, called *Vulpinalia*, or the feast of the foxes, which Ovid makes mention of. For, inquiring into the custom of tying lighted torches to their tails,

Cur igitur missæ vinctis ardentia tædes

Terga ferant vulpes, causa docenda mihi.

he resolves the matter, by telling us, that a certain youth having caught a fox which had destroyed much poultry, was going to burn it. His words are these:

Captivam stipulâ scœnoque involvit, et ignes

Admovet: urentes effugit illa manus.

Qua fugit, incendit vestitos meilibus agros,

Damnosis vires ignibus aura dabat.

Factum abiit: Monumenta manent: nam vivere captam

Nunc quoque lex vulpem Carseolana vetat.

Utque luat pœnas gens hæc, cerealibus ardet,

Quoque modo segetes perdidit, ipsa perit.

Fastorum, lib. iv.

But Bochart has confuted this notion of Ovid's concerning the origin of this custom, and endeavours to refer it to this piece of history in Samson's life; *Saurin, vol. iv. Dissert. 17.*

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1343, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

and (to name no more) that Jephthah's sacrificing his daughter to God, is partly adumbrated by Agamemnon's offering his Iphigenia to Diana, and partly by Idomeneus's promising to make a victim to Neptune of the first thing he should meet on shore, (if he escaped the present storm), which happened to be his own son. So happily do many fictions of the poets concur to confirm the truth and authority of holy writ.

DISSERTATION II.

Jephthah's rash Vow.

The state
of the
quest. on.

THIS vow of Jephthah's, which has employed the thoughts and pens of so many learned men, is conceived in these words:—*And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, then it shall be, that whosoever cometh forth out of the door of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.* And the result of this vow was,—*That Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them, and the Lord delivered them into his hands; whereupon he came to Mizpeh unto his house, and behold his daughter came out to meet him, with timbrels, and with dances, and she was his only child: Beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his cloaths, and said, Alas! my daughter, thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me; for I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which proceeded out of thy mouth, forasmuch as the Lord has taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon: Only let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I, and my fellows. And he said, Go; and he sent her away for two months, and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass, at the end of two months, that she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow, which he had vowed, and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, that*

the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah, four days in a year. I set the whole passage before the reader, that he may the better judge of the depending controversy there is among commentators, whether this daughter of Jephthah's was really sacrificed or no: And for his farther satisfaction in this point, I will fairly state the arguments on both sides; consider a little on which side they preponderate; and then inquire, in case he did sacrifice his daughter, or (as others will have it) devote her only to God's service in a single life, whether the thing was lawful for him to do, and what might possibly be the motive of his doing it.

A. M.
2561 &c.
Ant. Chris.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

Those (f) who maintain the negative, or more merciful side of the question, argue in this manner:—That Jephthah was certainly a very good man, because we find him ranked among the worthies of old, that are commemorated with honour by the author of the Hebrews: That he was an Israelite, and as such lived under the law, which prohibited human sacrifices by the severest penalties: That had the vow been intended in this sense, God would never have vouchsafed Jephthah so signal a victory as he did, which must have terminated in the violation of his own laws: And therefore they conclude, that so kind and tender a father as Jephthah is represented, would never have sacrificed an innocent, dutiful, and obedient child, as her whole carriage seems to denote her, in discharge of a rash and inconsiderate vow; especially when, according to the prescription of the law, he might have redeemed his daughter at a price so inconsiderable, (g) *as ten shekels of silver.*

Arguments
for the ne-
gative.

It must be something else, therefore, say they, that Jephthah did unto his daughter, and that (according to the import of the text) was to devote her to a state of celibacy, or that she might live in the manner of a religious nun all the days of her life: For the particle *vah*, which we render AND, (*it shall surely be the Lord's, AND I will offer it up*) is a disjunctive in this place, (as it is elsewhere), and signifies OR; so that the true version of the passage should be, *whatever cometh forth to meet me shall surely be the Lord's, OR, I will offer it up for a burnt-offering*, i. e. if it be an human creature, I will dedicate it to the service

(f) Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries. Jenkins's reasonableness, vol. ii. c. 18, ; Selden, De jure nat. et gent. lib. iv. c. 11.; Howell's History, &c. (g) Lev. xxvii. 5,

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

of God; if a beast of any kind, proper for sacrifice, I will instantly offer it up: For that in this sense the vow is to be understood, is evident from her going into the mountains to bewail her virginity, which, had she been doomed to be sacrificed, had not been near so proper, as to bewail her untimely end. Nor can we think that Jephthah would have ever suffered her to have made a circuit of two months among her companions, for fear of making her escape, or procuring some of her friends and acquaintance, either to rescue her, or intercede for her, had she been destined to suffer death upon her return.

On the contrary, when she returned to her father, and he had done to her according to his vow, it immediately follows, that she knew not man; which shews that the purpose of his vow was answered by obliging her to a state of perpetual virginity, in some retired place, where we was secluded from all society, except that the daughters of Israel (those especially of her acquaintance) went up, either to talk and converse with her, or to celebrate her praise, or to comfort her concerning her solitary condition, (for to all these senses may the word *Letannoth* be applied), *four days in the year*, i. e. one day every quarter.

Upon the whole, therefore, they infer, that Jephthah's daughter did not fall a sacrifice, but was consecrated to God and his service, i. e. devoted to a single life, and to remain a recluse all her days; which could not but occasion Jephthah no small grief and trouble, because, by this means his family became extinct, and himself destitute of issue to inherit his estate, and perpetuate his name.

These are some of the most plausible arguments that are generally employed to prove, not the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter, but only her obligation to a perpetual virginity in the worship and service of God.

And for the
affirmative.

Those (*b*) that maintain the affirmative, or harsher side of the question, viz. that Jephthah, in pursuance of his vow, did actually sacrifice his daughter, form their arguments in this manner—(*i*) That the times wherein Jephthah lived, were so sadly addicted to idolatry, that (*k*) *to burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods*, was a common practice among the Israelites, as well as other

(*b*) Edward's inquiry into some remarkable texts. (*i*) Deut. xii. 31. (*k*) Saurin, vol. iii. Dissert. 15.

nations;

nations; and that the manner (1) in which he lived, (before he was called to the assistance of his country), which was chiefly by plunder and rapine, and bloodshed, might make him not incapable of vowing to sacrifice the first of his domestics that should meet him upon his victorious return: That this vow is delivered in general and indefinite terms, viz. that *whatsoever should come forth out of the doors of his house to meet him*, that should surely be the Lord's, and it should be the Lord's *by being offered up for a burnt-offering*: That tho' the particle *vah* be sometimes used in a disjunctive sense, yet it can only be so, where things are really distinct and different from each other, but cannot be admitted, where the one manifestly includes the other, as it is in the passage before us; that therefore it is much more congruous to all the rules of good sense to understand the words of Jephthah so, as that, by promising whatsoever he met should be the Lord's, he obliged himself in general to consecrate it to God, and that, by promising farther, that he would offer it up for a burnt-offering, he specified the manner in which he intended to make his consecration.

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

Vows of perpetual virginity, say they, are institutions of a modern date: The word of God knows nothing of them; nor has this pretended celibacy of Jephthah's daughter any manner of foundation in Scripture; and therefore, when this circumstance is inserted, that *she knew no man*, it is not to signify, that she lived a perpetual virgin, but only, that she was so unhappy, as to leave the world in her youth, and before she had the knowledge of a man.

Had Jephthah meant no more, say they, by performing his vow, than consecrating his daughter, as a perpetual virgin, to the service of God, what cause was there for renting his cloaths, and bemoaning himself, as we find he did? Had Jephthah made only a vow of celibacy for his daughter, whereby she was bound to nothing more painful, than to lead a single life, what reason was there for bewailing this as a grievous calamity, which some men account a thing so eminently glorious and honourable? Is the being shut up as a recluse, and entered into the list of perpetual virgins, a matter of such bitter complaint and lamentation? Was this so fore an evil, an affliction so

(1) Grotius in locum; Calmet's Dissert. sur le vœu Japhet, et Saurin, De eodem, &c.

A. M.
2561, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

extraordinary, that not only before she underwent it, she and her companions should, for two months together, be allowed to bewail it; but that, after she had undergone it, the daughters of Israel should be required to lament it four times a year? (m) If she was actually put to death, in execution of her father's vow, it is easy then to understand, why the particular circumstance of her dying without issue (when she was the only daughter of her father, and had no other prospect of posterity to keep up his family) should be represented as a fore aggravation of her violent and untimely death: But it seems very difficult to account for that bitter lamentation, made by her father, by herself, by her companions, and by all the daughters of Israel in succeeding times, if she suffered no other, no severer punishment, than that of being devoted to a single life.

These are some of the most prevailing arguments on the affirmative side; and for the confirmation of them, it is farther alledged, that both Josephus, and the Chaldee paraphrast testify the same thing; that the ancient doctors, both of the Jewish and Christian church, were of the same opinion; and that, as to the substance of the fact, the compilers of the homilies of our church do perfectly agree with these ancient writers: So that how desirous soever we may be to clear Jephthah from the imputation of so cruel, so impious, so unnatural an act, as that of murdering his own daughter; yet if we will adhere to the more easy and obvious construction of the words, and as they appear to us at first view; or if we retain any just esteem and veneration for the sense of antiquity, we must necessarily conclude, that when it is said of him, that *he did with his daughter according to the vow which he had vowed*, the meaning can be no less, than he did really put her to death: But whether he acted well or ill in so doing, is another inquiry we are now to pursue.

Jephthah's
sacrificing
his daughter,
a great
crime.

The law of Cherem, (as the Hebrews call it), which is a law of a peculiar nature, is delivered in these words: (n) *No devoted thing, which a man shall devote to the Lord, of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession shall be sold, or redeemed; every devoted thing is most holy to the Lord. None devoted, which shall be devoted by men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death.*

(m) Bishop Smalridge's sermons.

(n) Lev. xxvii 28, 29.

Of this sort a very learned (o) commentator supposes this vow of Jephthah's to have been, and that therefore he could not redeem his daughter, but was necessitated to put her to death. It is to be observed, however, that (p) *Cherem* (which is the term here made use of) signifies either persons devoted to slaughter for their execrable impieties, (as were the Amalekites, and other nations, whom God commanded the Israelites to extirpate), or things destined to destruction (as were Jericho and Ai) for the wickedness of those to whom they appertained: so that the law of Cherem related only to such persons or things, as by an irrevocable vow, were destined to utter destruction for their horrid crimes, and because indeed there was particular command from God, both for the making or putting such a vow in execution: But it can by no means be pretended, either that Jephthah's daughter merited such a punishment, or that her father had any order or commission from God to inflict it. On the contrary, all human sacrifices are expressly forbidden, as odious and detestable to God: (q) *Thou shalt not do so to the Lord thy God; thou shalt not burn thy sons, and thy daughters in the fire*: as the Heathens used to do to their gods; *for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done*.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

There is one law indeed, which seems to be of some moment in the case before us, and that is this: — (r) *If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth*. But then all sober casuists are agreed, that a vow has only a constructive, not a destructive force, *i. e.* that it can only lay a new obligation, where there is none, or where there is one, strengthen it; but that it cannot cancel a former obligation, or superinduce one that is repugnant to it. Now all our obligations to obedience proceed from God. (s) He has an uncontrollable right to give laws to his creatures: but if men, by entering into vows, could free themselves from the obligation of his laws, they might then, whenever they pleased, by their own act defeat his authority. Whatever therefore is in itself forbidden by God, and for that reason unlawful; whatever is against any precept of natural or

(o) Lud. Cappel. diatr. de voto Jephthæ. (p) Edward's Inquiry into several texts. (q) Deut. xii. 31. (r) Numb. xxx. 2. (s) Bishop Smalridge's Sermons.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

revealed religion ; whatever is inconsistent with those relative duties which men owe to one another ; whatever, in short, is in any respect sinful, cannot by being made the matter of a vow, become justifiable. So that he, who hath vowed to do what cannot be done without sin, is so far from being obliged to perform his vow, that he is, notwithstanding his vow, obliged not to perform it ; because there is not only great obliquity in making such an unlawful vow, but this obliquity is so far from being lessened, that it is aggravated by keeping it.

(t) Since therefore the thing vowed by Jephthah seems to have been in itself unlawful ; since his daughter was innocent, and had done nothing to deserve death ; since the running out to meet her father, with joy and congratulation was an act of piety, which seemed to intitle her to his love and favour ; since the natural affection of a father towards his child ought to be stifled, before he could give way to the execution of the sentence of death upon her ; since the sacrificing of children to their gods was a crime, for which the Heathen nations were justly detested, and punished by God ; since Jephthah's offering his daughter as a victim to the Lord, might reflect a dishonour upon the true God, as if he also delighted in such sacrifices ; since these, I say, and several other things, might be urged in aggravation of this action, we may safely and confidently aver, (u) with the Jewish historian, *that the sacrifice which Jephthah offered was neither lawful nor acceptable to God*, but on the contrary, a very impious act, and an abominable crime, though it might possibly proceed from a mistaken principle of religion.

But from what motives he might think himself obliged to do it.

The religious observation of oaths and vows has at all times been esteemed a duty incumbent on those that made them ; insomuch, that even when they have been procured by guile, they have not been thought destitute of their obligation. The Gibeonites certainly imposed upon the children of Israel, when they obtained from them a league of amity and friendship ; and yet we may observe what notions the Israelites had of this kind of obligation, when, in their public consultations, they say, (x) *We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel ; now therefore we may not touch them.* This was a remarkable instance before Jeph-

(t) Ibid. (u) Josephus's Antiq. lib. v. c. 9. (x) Josh. ix. 19.

thah's days, and it is not improbable, that he might have it in his remembrance, and imprudently make use of it, as a precedent of the irreversibleness of oaths, and of the inviolable tie he was under by reason of his vow : but in succeeding times, there is a passage in Scripture, which comes nearer to the case now before us. Saul, in the day of battle, perceiving his enemies to give ground, out of the abundance of his zeal, made a vow to God, that whoever would taste any food before the pursuit was over, should certainly die ; and upon this occasion, his own son Jonathan had like to have been made a sacrifice, merely because his father would have been thought religious and austere to the observation of his oath ; notwithstanding he was plainly excused from the obligation of it as to his son, who was both in another place, and ignorant of his father's will, and under necessity of taking some small refreshment, when he was so faint and hungry. What wonder then if Jephthah, who, we have reason to believe, was a person much more religiously inclined than Saul, should think himself under an obligation to observe his vow, even though it was to the destruction of his own and only daughter.

A. M.
2561, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1443, &c.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

What the acceptableness of Abraham's offering his son Isaac was, he had read in the book of Moses ; and this might possibly lessen the horror of the fact he was going to commit. For though Abraham had the positive command of God for what he did, which Jephthah could not pretend to, so that there was a great disparity between their two cases ; yet it was plain, from the acceptableness of Abraham's offering, and the great reward bestowed on him for his intended oblation, that the sacrificing a beloved child was not, in all cases, and under all circumstances, sinful, but might be so circumstantiated, as to be an act of piety, and approved in the sight of God : and when this example proved such an action, (as to the matter and substance of it), not only lawful, but commendable, Jephthah might from hence be led into an opinion that the difference between his case and that of Abraham, was not so great, as that what was laudible and almost meritorious in the one, should be imputed as an unpardonable crime to the other.

He had read likewise in the law, that (y) *when thou*

(y) Deut. xxiii. 21.

A. M. 2561, &c. Ant. Christ. 1443, &c. from Jud. i. to the end of Ruth.

shalt vow a vow unto the Lord, thou shalt not be slack to pay it; and was sensible, that a wilful neglect of this was an heinous crime, (x) a mocking of God, a dissembling with heaven, and an act of injustice and unfaithfulness towards him, who is a severe exactor of vows, and is wont to avenge the breach of them by the infliction of the sorest punishments; and upon these premises, he might possibly argue with himself in this manner: "Though I know that the performance of my vow will be accompanied with murder, yet I consider likewise, that my not performing it will be attended with downright perjury. Seeing then there is a necessity of sinning one way or other, I am resolved to chuse the former; for though that be an injury to my daughter, yet the other is an affront to God. My child is dear to me indeed, but my God, my father, is much more so. It is better therefore to be cruel than impious; to be guilty of bloodshed, than to be perjured and false to the Lord of heaven and earth. *I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.* I must not reverse, I dare not revoke the sacred promise which I have made to the Almighty; but my firm and unshaken purpose is to perform it." Thus the mistaken sense of the indissoluble obligation which his vow had laid upon him, blinded his eyes, and ran him upon this fatal rock.

He could not but know, (had he considered at all), that no vow is obligatory, where the matter of it is unlawful; or that, what is unlawful in itself, cannot possibly be made otherwise by the interposition of a vow. Nay, he could not but know, that to act unlawfully, in virtue of a vow, was a double sin, since not only the vow itself was sinful, but the act, consequent thereupon, was sinful likewise; and yet so blind sometimes is the zeal of an erroneous conscience, that it will not suffer men to perceive, at least to be governed by the most rational and self-evident principles.

Upon the whole, therefore we may conclude, that how great soever this sin of Jephthah's was, yet (properly speaking) it was the sin of ignorance, and the effect of a misguided conscience. By the bitter complaint, which he uttered upon the first sight of his daughter coming out to meet him, it is evident, that he was under great trouble and perplexity; and as she had done nothing to alienate

his affections from her, but in this very act of meeting him had done something to engage his affections more strongly towards her, the bowels of a father must necessarily yearn to save the life of a loving and a beloved child. The generous offer which she made him, that he might do to her what he pleased, according to his vow, though it made the doing of it less unjust, could not but add a fresh sting to his grief, and, if he had any generosity in his breast, make him do it with more reluctance. No one, who is a parent; no one who has felt the workings of nature towards his own issue; no one who hath suffered, or who hath feared the loss of an only child, but must be sensible of what pangs of sorrow, what meltings of compassion, what agonies of grief must pierce the soul of Jephthah, when he imagined himself under the sad necessity of sacrificing his own, his only, his virgin-daughter, whom he could not offer up for a burnt-offering, without sacrificing at the same time all the propensions of nature, all the ease and pleasure of his life all the prospect of keeping up his family. Nothing less than a mistaken opinion of the indispensable obligation of his vow could prevail with him, thus to overrule the strong motives of interest and inclination; and a mistake which took its rise from so good a principle, must, without question, at least extenuate the guilt, in the judgment both of good-natured men, and of an all-merciful God.

We cannot, however, part with this remarkable piece of history, without making one inference, *viz.* that we should be strictly careful how we engage ourselves, in any rash and indeliberate vows; because, as a vow is confessedly an act of religion, when once *we have opened our mouths unto the Lord*, we cannot, without manifest prevarication and contempt of God's authority, *go back*. And therefore (to conclude in the words of a great (a) divine already quoted upon this subject) "as in civil life, men of the best character for integrity, and such as are most punctual in keeping their words, are observed to be very sparing in making promises; so in religion, the best way we can take to observe the precept given us by Solomon, (b) *that when we vow a vow unto God we should not defer to pay it*, will be in the first place, to observe another précept, which he lays down before this, *viz.*

(a) Smalridge's Sermons. (b) Eccles. v. 4.

"that

A. M.
2561, etc.
Anc. Christ.
1443, etc.
from Jud. i.
to the end
of Ruth.

A. M. 2561, &c. Ant. Christ. 1443, etc. from Jud. i. to the end of Ruth.

“ that (c) we should not be rash with our mouths, nor let our hearts be hasty to utter any thing before God.”

C H A P. III.

From the Birth of Samuel to the Death of Saul.

The HISTORY.

A. M. 2888, &c. Ant. Christ. 1116, &c. from 1 Sam. i. to the end.

DURING the time of Samson's great exploits, both the civil and ecclesiastical administration seems to have been in the hands of Eli the high-priest, in the beginning of whose government Samuel was born. He was the son of Elkanah, a Levite who dwelt in Ramah, † a city belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, and (as the custom of

(c) Ecclef. ver. 2.

† Ramah signifies an *eminence*, or *high situation*, and is therefore an appellation given to several places that are built in this manner. This is said to have stood upon Mount Ephraim, thereby to distinguish it from other towns, in different tribes, of the same denomination; and the reason why it is here called *Ramathaim*, in the dual number, is, as some imagine, because it was built upon two hills, which made it appear as a double city; and because it was situated on high, and had a watch-tower built in it, it therefore had the title of *Zophim* added to it. It stood upon the road that led from Samaria to Jerusalem: and for this reason, as well as its advantageous situation, Baasha king of Israel caused it to be fortified, that there might be no passage out of the land of Judah into that of Israel, 1 Kings xv. 17. and 2 Chron. xvi. 1.; but in St. Jerom's days it was no more than a small village. Here it was that Samuel passed a great part of his time; for his mother's dedication of him to the service of God did not confine him to Shiloh, after that God had called him out to a public employ, and appointed him his residence in a place more convenient for the execution of it. The truth is, after the captivity of the ark, and the death of Eli, all religious ceremonies seem to have ceased at Shiloh; for which reason it is said, that Samuel built an altar at Ramah, the place of his residence, to the intent that the people might resort to him, either to receive judgment, or to offer sacrifices, which, though it was contrary to the law of Moses, seemed to be a case of necessity; because the ark being at one place, and the tabernacle at another, neither of them could properly be resorted to, either for sacrificing, or any other part of public worship; *Patrick's*, *Le Clerc's*, and *Calmet's Commentaries*; and *Universal History*.

those

those times was) had two wives, whose names were Hannah and Peninnah. * Thrice every year he used to go to Shiloh, there to offer up his usual sacrifice, and as he was a pious and religious man, he generally took his two wives with him, that they, in like manner, might make their oblations. Now Hannah, though she had no children, was his favourite wife, and therefore, at † every feast upon the peace-offering, he usually sent her a separate mess, and of the choicest of the meat; which the other perceiving, was wont to † upbraid her with her sterility, or want of children. Hannah took this so fore to heart that all the kind things which her husband said to her, could not assuage or comfort her; but as soon as she rose from table, away she hastens to the tabernacle, and there pours out her soul before God, desiring of him to bless her with a son, which favour if he would grant her, she promised to make him a Nazarite, and all the days of his life devote him to his service.

A. M.
2883, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

Her prayers were heard, and, in a proper time, she conceived, and brought forth a son, whom she called Samuel, even because she had asked him of the Lord, (for so his name imports), and after he was grown to a competent age, she brought him to Shiloh, and, in a very joyful and thankful manner, presented him to Eli, who gladly re-

* The precept is exactly thus,—*Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord thy God*, Exod. xxiii. 17. which were at the feast of the passover, the pentecost, and that of the tabernacles; but women were exempted from this attendance; and therefore it was an extraordinary act of piety for Elkanah to take his two wives with him.

† The blood of this peace-offering was shed at the foot of the altar, the fat was burnt, the breast and right shoulder was the priest's perquisite, and all the rest belonged to the person who brought the victim. With this he made a feast of charity, to which he called his friends and relations, and, in several places of Scripture, God reminds him to invite the Levite, the poor, the fatherless, and the widow; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† Sterility was looked upon among the Jews as one of the greatest misfortunes that could befall any woman; insomuch that to have a child, though the mother immediately died thereupon, was accounted a less affliction than to have none at all. And to this purpose we may observe, that the widwife comforts Rachel in her Labour, even though she knew her to lie at the point of death, in these terms, *Fear not, for thou shalt have this son also*, Gen. xxxv. 17; *Saurin, in vol. iv. Dissert. 17.*
ceived

A. M. 2888, etc. received him, and immediately clothed him with a proper habit, even with a linen * Ephod, that he might attend on the service of the tabernacle.

Ant. Christ. 1116, etc. Eli himself was a very good man, but by much too indulgent to his children. He had two sons, Hophni and Phineas, who were mere libertines. They domineered over the men, and debauched the women at their devotions; and so far were they from being content with the portions which God had allotted them as priests, that they forced from the people (even before they had made their oblations) what part of the sacrifice they pleased; which gave so general a disgust, that religion grew into contempt, and the worship of God came to be disused.

from 1 Sam. i. to the end. Eli's remiss government. The death of his two sons, himself, and daughter-in-law.

Eli was not unacquainted with his sons ill conduct; but instead of chastising them as his authority required, he contented himself with reproving them now and then, but that in such gentle and mild terms, as rather encouraged than deterred them from proceeding in their wicked practices; till at length, God being provoked with this his remissness, † sent a prophet to threaten him and his family with utter destruction; to upbraid him with his ingratitude in slighting the sacerdotal honour which he had conferred on him; to foretell the death of his two sons both in one day, † the removal of his priesthood into another and better

* The Ephod which the high-priest wore (as we have described it elsewhere, vol. ii. page 479, was a very rich habit indeed, Exod. xxviii. 6.; but there were other kinds of Ephods, which not only priests and Levites, but even laymen, upon some occasions, wore, as we find in the instance of David, 2 Sam. vi. 14. which was not a sacred, but an honorary garment, as we may call it, and such as the high-priest might order Samuel to wear, to distinguish him from some other inferior officers belonging to the tabernacle; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Who this prophet was, commentators are at a loss to know. Some imagine, that it was Phineas, the son of Eleazar; but Phineas very probably was dead long before this time. Others will needs have it to be Elkanah, Samuel's father; and some Samuel himself: But we no where read, that the father was endued with the spirit of prophecy, and the son was certainly then too young, and unacquainted with the voice of God. The safest way therefore is, to own our ignorance of what the sacred historian hath not thought proper to discover to us; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† The high-priesthood was originally settled upon Eleazar, the son of Aaron, by a divine decree; but that decree being conditional

ter family, and the extreme povetry which his posterity would fall into, upon their ejection from the sacerdotal office : Nor was it long before God discovered the same heavy judgments to Samuel, which was the first revelation he made to this young prophet, and which Eli, when he was told it, received with a mind fully resigned to the divine pleasure : (a) *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.*

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

In these days † there were but few prophets, and revelations were very scarce ; and therefore when the Israelites perceived, by the truth of his predictions, that God had appointed Samuel to the prophetic office, they were not a little rejoiced : And it was from the great expectations they had of God's favour in renewing this order of men among them, that they took up arms, in order to rescue themselves from the Philistines yoke. The army of the Israelites encamped at a place which was afterwards called * *E-ben-ezer*, and that of the Philistines at Aphek, a city of Judah ; but when they came to join battle, the Israelites were defeated with the loss of four thousand men.

conditional only, it is reasonable to presume that there was some great offence or other in Eleazar's family, (though not recorded in Scripture), which provoked God to remove it into the family of Ithamar, who was Aaron's youngest son, and from whom Eli descended ; and here, for the abominable practices of his sons, which he was too negligent to restrain, God threatens to translate the priesthood back again from the family of Ithamar to that of Eleazar, which accordingly happened in the reign of King Solomon, who deposed Abiathar, the last of Eli's line, from the pontificate, and set up Zadock in his stead ; *Pool's Annotations.*

(a) 1 Sam. iii. 18.

† Whatever revelations God might impart to some pious persons privately, there was at this time none publicly acknowledged for a prophet, unto whom the people might resort to know the mind of God ; nay, so little acquainted were these ages with the prophetic spirit, that we read of no more than two prophets, Judg. iv. 4. and vi. 8. in all the days of the Judges ; *Patrick's Commentary.*

* This place is here mentioned prophetically ; for it had not this name till about twenty years after, 1 Sam. iv. 1. when Samuel fought with the Philistines, and gave them a total overthrow, and set up a monument of his victory (for the proper name signifies *the stone of help*) in the field of battle, which lay on the north border of Judah, not far from Mizpeh ; and Aphek, where the Philistines incamped, must not be far distant from it ; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. iii.*

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i, to the end.

The capti-
vity of the
ark, and the
wonders it
did until it
was sent
home.

The reason of this defeat was imputed by some to their want of the ark in the army, which, as the symbol of God's presence, would be a sure means of success, and therefore they sent to Hophni and Phineas to bring it with them, and when it arrived in the camp, received it with many a joyful acclamation. The Philistines, at first, were dispirited at the news, as much as their enemies were animated : But at length taking heart, and exhorting one another to act courageously, they repulsed the Israelites, when they came to attack them ; and having slain thirty thousand of their foot, (among whom were Hophni and Phineas), they routed the rest, and put them all to flight, so that the ark of the Lord fell into their hands,

This ill news a soldier of the tribe of Benjamin, escaping from the field of battle, brought to Shiloh that very day, with the usual emblems of extreme sorrow, * his cloaths rent, and earth upon his head ; and then there was no small outcry and lamentation in the city. Eli inquiring the cause of it, had the soldier brought before him, who gave him an account, * that the Israelites were routed

* If we consult Josh. vii. 6. Job ii. 12. and Ezek. xxvii. 39. we shall find, that this was the manner of mens expressing their deep sorrow for any great calamity that had befallen them. And accordingly we find Virgil representing Latinus rending his cloaths, and throwing dust upon his grey hairs, when he laments his private and public calamities :

—It, scissa veste, Latinus

Canitiem immundo perfusam pulvere turpans. *Æneid.* 12.

* Who this Benjamite was that brought the ill news to Shiloh of the loss of the battle, the history is silent, and the conjecture of some Jews, that it probably was Saul, is very uncertain and precarious : But there is something very remarkable in the account which he gives of the action. The words are these :—*And Eli said to the Benjamite, What is there done in the battle, my son ? And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons, Hophni and Phineas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken,* 1 Sam. iv. 16, 17, Madam Dacier highly commends the manner wherein the sacred historian makes his messenger speak, and compares these words, *Hophni and Phineas are dead, and the ark of the Lord is taken,* with those of Antilochus to Achilles, when he tells him the sad news.—

Καίται Πάτροκλος νέκυνος δὲ δὴ ἀμφιμάχονται

Γυμνὰ ἅπαρ τὰ νε τὸν ἐχέει κορυβαίολος Ἐκτωρ. *Iliad.* 18.

Whereupon she quotes the glossary which Eustathius has upon this passage

routed, his two sons slain, and the ark taken. Eli heard the defeat of the army, and the death of his sons with courage and unconcern enough; but when he came to understand, that the ark of the Lord was fallen into the enemy's hand, his spirits forsook him, and being both heavy and aged, he fell from his seat, and broke his neck and died; after he had been the supreme magistrate in Israel * for the space of forty years: And what was a farther family-misfortune, his son Phineas had a wife, then big with child, and near her time, who hearing of her father's and husband's death, and (what was the worst of all) of the captivity of the ark, fell in labour at the news, and being delivered of a son, had just strength to name him *Ichabod*, i. e. *no glory*, before she died; because *the ark*, which was the glory of Israel, (as she assigns the reason), *was departed from them*.

The Philistines having thus got possession of the ark, * carried it in triumph to one of their principal cities, named

passage in Homer. "This speech of Antilochus (says that excellent critic) affords us a pattern, with what brevity such melancholy news should be related: For, in two verses, it comprises every thing that happened, the death of Patroclus, the person who slew him, the encounter about his body, and his arms in the possession of his enemy. The Greek tragic poets have not been so wise as to imitate this; and, of all others, Euripides, who, upon the most doleful occasion, is so apt to make long recitals, is most egregiously defective herein. Homer is the only author that deserves to be followed. No thing is more ridiculous, than to hear a messenger, when he is to report some very bad news, running into tedious circumstances, and pathetic expressions. All he talks is not minded: For he to whom he addresses himself, cannot attend to what he says; the first word that acquaints him with the misfortune, makes him deaf to every thing else;" *Saurin, vol. iv. dissert. 23.*

* The Septuagint, and some ancient manuscripts, make the term of Eli's magistracy to be no more than twenty years; and to reconcile this with the Hebrew text, some suppose, either that he had Samson joined in the government with him for the first twenty years of his administration, or his sons, for the last; but there is no reason for the solution of a difficulty which arises from nothing else but a fault in the text of the Septuagint; *Calmet's Commentary.*

* It was a custom among the Heathens, to carry in triumph the images of the gods of such nations as they had vanquished. Isaiah prophesies of Cyrus, that in this manner he would treat the gods of

A. M. 2388, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

named *Ashdod*, and there placed it in the temple of their god Dagon hard by his image. The next morning the people of * *Ashdod*, going into the temple, found Dagon fallen

Babylon :—*Bel boweth, Nebo stoopeth ; their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle,—and themselves are gone into captivity*, Isaiah xlii .1, 2. Daniel foretels of Ptolemy Euergetes, that he would carry captive into Egypt the gods of the Syrians, with their princes, Dan. xi. 8. And the like predictions are to be met with in Jeremiah xlviii. 7. and in Amos i. 15. We need less wonder therefore, that we find Plutarch, in the life of Marcellus, telling us, that he took away out of the temples of Syracuse, the most beautiful pictures and statues of their Gods, and that afterwards it became a reproach to Marcellus, and raised the indignation of other nations against Rome, “ That he carried along with him, not men only, but the very gods captive, and in triumph ;” *Saurin, vol. iv. dissert. 24.*

* The Philistines were descendents from Mizraim, the father of the Egyptians, and so, in all probability, having their first settlement in Egypt, or the parts adjoining, lay to the south-west of the land of Canaan. In process of time however, they made inroads upon Canaan, and, in Abraham’s days, had got possession of a good part of the territories which lay along the western coasts of the Mediterranean sea. This tract of ground was divided into five principalities, or little kingdoms, viz. Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Akron ; which for the better understanding of some particulars related of the ark, during its stay in this country, it will not be improper to describe all together. The city of Gaza, (from which the territory took its name) stood, as it were, on the very southwest angle, or corner of the land of Canaan ; but of this place we have spoken before. To the north of Gaza lay next the city of Askelon, called by the Greeks *Ascalon*, and of great note among the Gentiles for a temple dedicated to Dirceto, the mother of Semiramis, who was here worshipped in the form of a mermaid. To the north of Ascalon lay Ashdod, called by the Greeks *Azotus*, and famous for the temple of the god Dagon, whereof we have taken notice before. Still more to the north lay Gath, memorable for being the birth-place of the giant Goliath, whom David slew, and of several others of the same gigantic race. It was dismantled by Ozias king of Judah, and finally laid waste by Hazel king of Syria : However it recovered itself, and retained its old name in the days of Eusebius and St. Jerom, who place it about four miles from Eleutheropolis, in the way to Lidda. The most northern of these cities, still upon the coast of the Mediterranean sea, was Ekron, called by the Greeks *Accaron*, a place of great wealth and power, and famous for the idolatrous worship of Beelzebub,

fallen down upon his face before the ark ; but supposing this to be an accident, they set him up again ; and again, next morning, found him not only fallen down, but his head and the palms of his hands broken off, and lying upon the threshold ; whence there arose a superstitious use among the Philistines, that neither priest nor people would ever † tread upon his threshold.

By this means the people of Ashdod could not but perceive, that their Dagon was far inferior to the God of Israel, who, to make them still more sensible of this, smote them, and the inhabitants of the places adjacent, with emerods, and destroyed the fruits of their grounds with swarms of mice ; so that (to redress their complaints) the princes of the Philistines ordered the ark to be removed to Gath, where the same judgments befel the people of that place ; and when from thence it was carried to Ekron, not only the † plague of the emerods, but a wasting pestilence likewise,

Beelzebub, who had here a celebrated temple and oracle. But of this idol we shall have occasion to say more, when we come to the reign of Ahaziah, King of Judah, who sent in his illness to consult him ; *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii.

† It is somewhat strange, that when the Philistines saw their Dagon cast down before the ark of God, with his head and hands broken off, they should not thence infer, that he was no more than a vain idol : but instead of that, we find them honouring the very threshold, whereby he received these maims, as if they had been consecrated, or some divinity infused into them, from the mere touch of this idol. This is a fore instance of blindness and insatiation ; but it is no more than what other Heathen nations fell into. For whether the custom took its first rise from this practice of the Philistines or no, it is certain, that among the Romans the threshold was consecrated to the goddess Vesta, and those which belonged to temples, were always held in the highest veneration, as appears from Juvenal,——

——Tarpeium limen adora. Sat. 6.

and that other passage in Tibullus,——

Non ego, si merui, dubitem procumbere templis,

Et dare sacratis oscula liminibus. Lib. i. eleg. 5.

Nay, at this very day, there are some mosques in Persia, whose thresholds are covered over with plates of silver, and which the people are not allowed to tread on : for that is a crime which cannot be expiated, without undergoing very severe pains and penalties ; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† The word *Apholim*, which only occurs here, and in the

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Chriſt.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

wife, went along with it; ſo that the people were reſolved to ſend it away, and to that purpoſe called their prieſts together to adviſe with them in what manner they might beſt do it. The prieſts adviſed them to provide a new cart, and to yoke to it two milch kine, that had never drawn before, but to keep up their calves confined. In this cart they ordered them to place the ark, and (becauſe it was proper to make ſome treſpaſs-offering to the God of Iſrael) to have five * golden emerods, and as many golden mice (according to the number of the principal cities of the Philiftines) made, and put in a coffer by the ſide of the ark. But, above all, they cautioned them to take notice, which way

28th chapter of Deuteronomy, is, by different interpreters, ſuppoſed to ſignify different things. Some take it for a *dysentery*, others for what they call *procidentia ani*; ſome for a *cancer*, and others for ſomething *venereal* in that part. The Scripture tells us expreſſly, that *God ſmote his enemies in the hinder parts*, Pſal. lxxviii. 66. And therefore our tranſlation is not amiſs, which ſuppoſes their malady to have been ſuch painful tumours in the fundament as very frequently turn into ulcers; *Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

* It was a prevailing opinion among the Heathens, that the only way to appeaſe their gods, when offended at them, was to offer them preſents;—

Munera, crede mihi, capiunt homineſque deoſque.

Placatur donis Jupiter ipſe datis. Ovid. De arte, lib. 3. and therefore, no wonder that the Philiftines prieſts hit upon this thought: and why they ſent, along with the ark, the images of the parts which were afflicted with this fore diſeaſe, might proceed from a common cuſtom likewise among the Heathens, of conſecrating to their gods ſuch monuments of their deliverance, as repreſented the evils from whence they had eſcaped, or the members which had been diſordered. Thus the people of Athens, having been afflicted with a ſhameful diſeaſe for not receiving the myſteries of Bacchus with a proper reverence, and conſulting the oracle what they were to do, in order to have it removed, were directed to make figures of the part affected, and preſent them to the god which gave them this counſel: and accordingly the Philiftines, hoping ſhortly to be delivered from the emerods and mice, wherewith they were ſorely infeſted, took the ſame method to get quit of them. Nor is the practice ceaſed among the Indians (as *Tavernier* relates in his travels, page 92.) when any pilgrim goes to a pagod for the cure of any diſeaſe, for him to bring the figure of the member afflicted, either in gold, ſilver, or copper, according to his quality, and to offer it to the idol in a moſt ſubmiſſive manner; *Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

the * kine went ; for if they took towards Judea, they might conclude that these judgments were of the God of Israel's infliction, if any other way, they might look upon them only as common accidents.

A. M.
2838, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

When all things were thus got ready, the kine were let go ; and taking the road which led to Bethshemeth, in the way to Judea, they went lowing along until they came to the field of one Joshua, and there stood still by a great stone. Bethshemeth was one of the cities belonging to the Levites, and therefore, when word was brought them of the arrival of the ark, they went and took it down, and the coffer with it ; and cleaving the wood of the cart for a fire, sacrificed the two kine for a burnt-offering to the Lord. But whether out of joy or curiosity, so it was that some of the Bethshemites adventuring to look into the ark, which was expressly against the divine command, were immediately slain to the number of seventy, which so terrified the rest, that they sent to the people of Kirjath-jearim, acquainting them that the Philistines had brought back the ark, and desiring them to come and fetch it ; which accordingly they did, and placed it in the house of one Abinadab, (whose son was consecrated to keep it), and there it continued for the space of twenty years.

Upon the death of Eli, Samuel succeeded to the government ; and having called the people together, very probably upon the occasion of removing the ark from Bethshemeth to Kirjath-jearim, * he exhorted them very earnestly to

Samuel's
government, and
his sons
mal-admini-
stration.

* It was no bad policy in the Philistines to take milch kine, that had never been yoked before, to draw the cart, in order to know whether there was the hand of God in what had befallen them. As these creatures were unacquainted with the yoke, it would be a wonder if they should go jointly together, and not thwart or draw counter to each other ; it would be a wonder if their natural affection would not incline them to return to their calves, left behind ; and it would still be a greater wonder, if, when there were so many different ways to take, they should go directly forward to Judea, without any manner of deviation. It was therefore a matter of no small sagacity for them to make this experiment : To say nothing, that it was a received opinion among the Heathens, that in the motions of an heifer or cow that was never yoked, there was something ominous, and declarative of the divine will.

Bos tibi, Phœbus ait, folis occurret in arvis,
Nullum passa jugum, curvique immunis aratri ;

Hac duce, carpe vias.

Ovid. Metam. lib. 3.

* The speech which, according to Josephus, Samuel makes to
the

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. tot. c. end.

to renounce their idolatrous practices, and to devote themselves entirely to the worship of God, and then they need not doubt but that he would deliver them from all their enemies. This the people promised him faithfully to do; so that Samuel dismissed them for the present, but ordered them to meet him again, within a certain time, at † Mizpeh.

Here they held a solemn fast and humiliation to the Lord. They wept, and prayed, confessed their sins, offered sacrifices, and † made libations; and Samuel took this

the people, upon this occasion, is to this effect:—"Ye men of Israel, since ye find by experience, that the malice of your enemies is implacable, and that your earnest supplications to God for relief are graciously received; you should do well to consider, that your wishing for the freedom you want will never do the business, without exerting your power to the uttermost, upon the proper means of procuring it: For to do otherwise, is but praying one way and acting another. Wherefore, in the first place, be careful not to bring scandal upon your profession by ill manners, but turn yourselves to the love and practice of justice, without partiality or corruption. Purge your minds of all gross affections. Turn to God, call upon him, adore him, and honour him in your lives and conversations, as well as with your lips. Do good things, and good will come on it, i. e. liberty and victory; for these are blessings not to be obtained by force of men, strength of body, or bands of soldiers; but God, who is truth itself, has promised them, as the rewards of probity and righteousness, and you may depend upon it, he will never disappoint you;" *Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. c. 2.*

† The Mizpeh here mentioned, as appears from the circumstances of the story, must be different from that which is remarked in the history of Jephthah. There is indeed another Mizpeh mentioned among the cities of Judah, Josh. xv. 38. and a third, among those of Benjamin, Josh. xviii. 26. Some are of opinion, that these two cities are one and the same, and are only supposed to be two, because they lie in the confines of each tribe; but if they are not the same, it seems most probable, that the Mizpeh in the tribe of Benjamin was the city which is here spoken of. And we may observe farther, that as Mizpeh is said to be situated not far from Eben-ezer, and probably on the east or north side; so Shem (if it be the name of a place, and not rather of some sharp rock thereabouts) was situated not far from it on the opposite, i. e. on the west or south-west-side, to which Bethcar must needs be contiguous; *Well's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. iii. c. 1.*

† The words in our translation run Thus:—"And they gathered to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the

this opportunity to administer justice among them. The Philistines hearing of this their assembly, took the alarm, and coming upon them unawares, put them into no small consternation. Upon Samuel's sacrifice and intercession, however, God declared himself manifestly in favour of the Israelites: For as soon as the fight began, there was heard * such a dreadful peal of thunder, as struck terror and amazement into the enemy, so that they betook themselves instantly to flight, and were pursued by the Israelites as far

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

the Lord, 1 Sam. vii. 6.; but what we are to understand by this water, the conjectures of commentators have been various. Some take these words in a metaphorical sense, to denote those tears of contrition, which were drawn, as it were, from the bottom of their hearts, and fell from their eyes before the Lord. Others think, that with this water they washed their bodies, as they are supposed to have done on another occasion, Exod. xix. 20. to signify the purification of their souls from the pollution of sin. Others, that they made use of it to cleanse the ground where Samuel was to erect an altar, that it might not stand upon an impure place. Some suppose that it was employed as an emblem of humiliation, of prayer, of expiation, of excretion, and I know not what besides. But the most probable opinion is, that this water was, upon this occasion, poured out, by way of libation before God: And for support of this, it is commonly alleged, that libations of this kind were very customary in ancient times; that Theophrastus, as he is cited by Porphyry, (De abst. lib. 2.), tells us that the earliest libations were of water, though afterwards honey and wine came into request: That Virgil (*Æneid.* iv.) mentions the practice of sprinkling the water of the lake Avernus; and that Homer (*Odyss.* 12.) remarks, that for want of wine, the companions of Ulysses poured out water in a sacrifice, which they offered to the gods. It is certain that David poured out unto the Lord the water which three gallant men in his army brought him from the well of Bethlehem, at the hazard of their lives, 2 Sam. xxiii. 16.; and therefore, though the law does not injoin any such libations of water; yet, since there is no positive prohibition of them, why may we not suppose, that upon this extraordinary occasion, something singular and extraordinary might have been done; *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries*

* Josephus gives us this account of the whole transaction:—
“In some places God shook the foundations of the earth under the feet of the Philistines, so that they could not stand without staggering; In others, it opened and swallowed them up alive, before they knew where they were; while the claps of thunder, and flashes of fire were so violent, that their very eyes and limbs were scorched to such a degree, that they could neither see their way before them, nor handle their arms;” *Jew. Antiq.* l. 6. c. 2.

A. M. 2888, etc.
 Ant. Chris. 1116, etc.
 from 1 Sam. i. to the end.

as Bethcar. The truth is, this was so signal a victory, that for a long time the Philistines durst not appear upon the frontiers of Israel, but were forced to restore the cities which they had taken from them; so that Samuel had good reason to set up a monument (which he did between Mizpeh and Shen, calling it *Eben-ezer*, i. e. *the stone of help*) in memory of so great a deliverance.

After this action, the most part of Samuel's government was employed in a peaceable administration of justice. For which purpose he took a circuit every year round a great tract of the country: But as he grew in years, he appointed his two sons Joel and Abiah to the execution of that office, who degenerating * from their father's example, became such mercenary and corrupt Judges, that the elders of Israel came in a body to Samuel, complained of the grievances they lay under, by reason of his infirmity, and his sons' male-administration, and thereupon demanded to have the form of their government changed, and a king instituted among them, as there was in other nations.

This demand was far from being agreeable to Samuel; however he consulted God upon it, who gave him answer, that he should comply with the people in what they desired; notwithstanding the affront did terminate not so much upon Samuel as himself: But before they proceeded to the choice of a king, he ordered him to acquaint them with what his prerogatives were, and what rights they might expect that he would demand from them; and withal to inform them, † that slavery to them and their children, subjection to the meanest offices, loss of liberty, heavy taxes,

* It may probably be made a question, why God did not punish Samuel, as he did Eli, for the wickedness of his sons? But to this it may be answered, that Samuel's sons were not so bad as those of Eli; since taking bribes privately was not like openly profaning the tabernacle, and making the worship of God contemptible. And besides this, it is possible that Samuel might be ignorant of the corruption of his sons, since he lived at Ramah, and they at Beer-sheba; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The rules of conduct, which God prescribes to the person that should at any time be constituted king over Israel, are of a quite different sort from these practices. *He shall not multiply horses to himself, neither shall he multiply wives to himself, neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver or gold.* He shall

taxes, constant war, and many other inconveniencies, would be the consequence of a kingly power. But † all these remonstrances availed nothing : The people persist in their desire of a king, and God tells Samuel, that he will not fail to give them one.

A. M.
2888, etc.
An. Carif.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end;

The appearance of providence in the election of their king was indeed very remarkable. Saul the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, was a very tall, handsome youth ; and it so happening at this time, that some of his father's asses being gone astray, he, and a servant along with him, were sent to look for them. They wandered about a great way without gaining any intelligence, till

write him a copy of the law in a book, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, and to keep all the words of this law, and those statutes, to do them, that his heart be not lifted up above his brethern, and that he turn not aside from the commandments, to the right hand or to the left, Deut. xvii. 16. etc. So that Samuel does not, in the words before us, define what are the just rights of kings, but describes only such practices as the kings of the east, who were despotic princes, and looked upon their subjects as so many slaves, were generally accustomed to : And the prophet had some reason to draw a king in those black colours, because the Israelites desired such a one as their neighbours had, who were all under the absolute dominion of their princes ; *Le Clerc's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

† It is generally supposed, that what made the Israelites so urgent at this time for a king, was a present streight they thought themselves in, for want of an able leader : For Nahash the king of the Amorites coming up to Jabesh-Gilead, and incamping before it, had put the inhabitants into such a fright, that without more to do, they offered to surrender upon terms, telling him, that *they would become subjects to him, if he would make a league with them,* 1 Sam. xi. 1. But the haughty Amorite, in contempt of Israel, let them know, that if he made a league with them the condition thereof should be, *that they should come out to him, and let him thrust out all their right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel.* The elders of Jabesh, in this sad circumstance, demanded seven days respite, that they might send messengers into all the coasts of Israel, and if in that time no succours arrived, they would submit. This, it is thought, was the reason for their pressing so hard upon Samuel at this time for a king ; whereas their duty was, to have inquired of the Lord (as they had done at other times) who it was that he would be pleased to constitute the general in this exigence, to lead out their forces against their enemies ; *Howell's History*, in the notes.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

coming to Ramah, the place of Samuel's residence, at his servant's instigation, he went to advise with him concerning the asses. God had apprised Samuel with the coming of the person that day, who was to be appointed king; and therefore Samuel, when he saw him, shewed him all the respect that was due to his future character. He took him with him † to the high-place, where he was going to sacrifice; he invited him to feast with him upon the sacrifices that were to be offered; and had invited thirty guests more to bear him company. He seated him in the highest place, and distinguished him likewise by ordering the choicest dishes to be served up to him. That evening he had a long conference with him in private, and the next morning, as he was waiting on him out of town, he ordered † the servant to be sent before, that he might acquaint him with God's purpose of exalting him to the regal dignity; and having † anointed him to be king of Israel,

† In several places of Scripture, the Canaanites are said to have had their high-places whereon they worshipped their idols; but this is the first instance of any belonging to the people of God; and it is the opinion of some learned men, that this appointment of a private or inferiour place of worship (even while the ark and tabernacle were in being) by so great an authority as that of Samuel gave rise to the institution of synagogues and *proseuchas* in so many places of the kingdom afterwards; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† This was with design to let Saul understand, that what he was going to do was by the divine order and appointment; and that when it should come to the casting of lots, (as it did afterwards, 1 Sam. x. 20.), he might perceive that he was not chosen king by chance of a lot. There might be likewise this further reason for Samuel's bidding Saul to send away his servant, *viz.* lest the people suspecting Samuel to do this by his own will, more than by God's appointment, might be inclinable to mutiny. Since this royal unction then was only designed for Saul's private satisfaction, it was necessary not to have it published before the people had proceeded to a public election of their king; *Howell's History*, in the notes.

† We read of no express command for the anointing of kings, and yet it is plain from the parable of Jotham, Jud. ix. 8. that this was a custom two hundred years before this time. Why oil, rather than any other liquid, was the symbol of conveying a legal authority, we are no where informed. It is true, that God directed Moses to consecrate Aaron to the high-priest's office, by anointing his head with oil, Exod. xxix. 7. But the anointing of kings, we may presume, was of a prior date.

Uction

Israel, he foretold him several † events, which should befall him in his return home, in token of the truth of his designation to that office.

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

Thus Saul was appointed king; but then it was only between Samuel and himself. To make his choice and inauguration therefore more public, Samuel called an assembly of the people together at Mizpeh, to which place the ark of the Lord was brought, that they might with more solemnity proceed to the election of a king. The method of their electing was this:—First, the lot was cast for every tribe separately, to know out of which the king was to be chosen, and the lot fell upon that of Benjamin: next, it was cast for all the families of this tribe, and fell upon that of Matri, and lastly, it was cast for all the persons of this family, and fell upon Saul, the son of Kish, who, when he came into the assembly, (for he chose to be absent

Unction indeed, in the days of Jacob, was the common method of setting apart from common use even things inanimate, Gen. xxviii. 18; and therefore it may well be supposed, that persons of such designation, as kings were, were all along admitted by the same ceremony, which might be of divine appointment, perhaps at the first institution of government, in the antediluvian world, and thence handed down, by a long tradition, to future generations. This rite of unction, in short, was so much the divine care, that we find God giving Moses a prescription how to make the consecrating oil, Exod. xxx. 23. But though Solomon was anointed with oil taken from the tabernacle, yet since Samuel was no priest, and could not therefore have access to the tabernacle, which at this time was at some distance from him, it is more reasonable to think, (though some Jewish doctors will have it otherwise), that what he made use of, upon this occasion, was no more than common oil; *Patrick's Commentary*

† The events which Samuel told Saul he should meet with in his return home, were these:—That near Rachael's tomb, he should meet two men, who should inform him, that his father's asses were found again; that departing thence, he would meet three men going to Bethel, one of them carrying three kids, another three cakes of bread, and the third a bottle of wine, and that they should give him two parts thereof; and that when he came to Geba, (which was commonly called *the hill of God*), where there was a garrison of the Philistines, he should meet a company of prophets going into the city, where the Spirit of God should fall upon him, and he (to the wonder of all that should hear him) should begin to prophesy among them; all which signs happened exactly as Samuel had foretold them; 1 Sam. x. 2. &c.

A. M.
2883, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

at the time of the election), and had been recommended by Samuel in a short speech upon that occasion, appeared so portly, and with so much majesty, that he gained the affections and good wishes of all, except some few disorderly persons, who disapproved of the choice, and (in pure contempt) refused to † make him the usual presents; which Saul could not but perceive, though in point of prudence he thought proper at that time † to overlook.

And conquers the
cruel king
of the Am-
monites.

Saul had not been many days upon the throne, before there happened a fit occasion for him to exert himself. Nahash, King of the Ammonites, laid siege to † Jabesh-Gilead

† It was a constant custom among the eastern nations, and is even to this day, whenever they approached the prince, to present him with something: But here, in the case of Saul, at his first accession to the throne, it was the proper method of recognizing him. The Caldee paraphrase says, that *they did not come to salute him, or wish him an happy reign*: But this is the same thing, because the first salutation offered to a king was always attended with presents, which carried with them a sign of peace and friendship, of congratulation and joy, and of subjection and obedience; *Calmet's commentary*.

† In this Saul acted a very wise and politic part, as being unwilling to begin his reign with any disorder or tumult, which his just resentment of such an affront might perhaps have occasioned. These sons of Belial (as they are termed) were, very likely, persons of some rank and quality; and therefore they despised Saul, for his having been related to a small tribe, and sprung from an obscure family. If then he had taken notice of this affront, and not revenged it, he had shewn himself mean-spirited; and if he had repented it as it deserved, he might both have provoked a party against him, and at his first setting out, incurred the censure of rashness and cruelty: a prejudice which, in the future course of his reign, would have been far from doing him any good; *Howell's History*, in the notes.

† This town lay on the side of Jordan, and not far distant from the Ammonites who besieged it. It was in being in the times of Eusebius and St. Jerom, and was situate upon a hill about six miles distant from Pella, as one goes to Gerasa. It is sometimes in Scripture simply called *Jabesh*, and what the inhabitants thereof are farther remarkable for, is—their grateful remembrance of the benefits they had received from Saul, when, after his death, having heard that the *Philistines had fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan*, they went all night, and took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons from the wall, and came to *Jabesh*, and burnt them there, and took their bones

and

Gilead on the other side of Jordan, and had so closely besieged it, that the people offered to capitulate; but on no better conditions would he permit them, than that each man should have † his right eye put out. Hereupon they sent to Gibeah to demand aid of King Saul † in the space of seven days, (for that was all the time allowed them); and he, having summoned all Israel to come to their assistance upon pain of death, in a very short time had an army of three hundred thousand Israelites, besides thirty thousand of the tribe of Judah, and with these he promised to relieve the besieged the very next day. Nor was he worse than his word: for dividing his army into three parts, and falling upon the besiegers about break of day, he so totally routed and dispersed them, that scarce two of them were left together.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days; for which they were highly commended by David, 2. Sam. ii. v. *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii.

† The reason why Nahash was for having their right eye put out, was not only to bring a reproach upon Israel, as himself declares, but to disable them likewise from serving in war; for, as the manner of fighting in those days was chiefly with bow and arrow, sword and shield, the loss of the right eye made them incapable of either; because, in combat, the left eye is covered with the shield, and in shooting with the bow, it is usual to wink with it; so that depriving them of their right eye, made them useless in war: And yet this barbarous king thought it not proper to put out both their eyes; as this would have made them utterly incapable of doing him the service, or acquiring the tribute for him, which he expected from them; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† It may seem a little strange, that this barbarous prince should be willing to allow the Jabeshites the respite of seven days; but Josephus assigns this reason for it, viz. that he had so mean an opinion of the people, that he made no difficulty to comply with their request. Saul indeed had been appointed king, but having not as yet taken upon him the government, he lived, just as he did before, in a private condition, 1 Sam. xi. v. So that had he, upon this notice, endeavoured to levy an army, he could scarce think it possible to be done in so short a space as seven days; and therefore he thought he might grant them these conditions without any danger, and without driving them to desperation, as he might have done had he denied them their request; *Patrick's Commentary*.

A. M. 2888, &c. Ant. Christ. 1116, etc. from 1 Sam. i. to the end. This victory †, and the deliverance which it procured from a barbarous and insulting enemy, raised their new king's fame to such a degree, that some, remembering the indignities that were put upon him at his coronation, were (in the height of their zeal) for having them now punished with death; but Saul very prudently opposed the motion, and expressed his aversion to have the glories of that day sullied with the blood of any of his subjects.

From this victory, however; Samuel took occasion to give those who had hitherto refused their allegiance, an opportunity of coming in, and recognizing the King; and for that purpose ordered a general meeting at Gilgal to confirm Saul's election; which accordingly was celebrated with mirth and joy between both king and people, as well as with sacrifices and thanksgivings to God, as the author of all their successes.

Samuel's speech upon the resignation of the government. Samuel was, at this time, to resign the government entirely into the hands of Saul; and therefore, in the speech which he made upon this occasion, he insisted not a little upon the vindication of his own administration. He reminded them of the great transgressions which they and their forefathers had committed; he set before them the blessings consequent upon their obedience, and the judgements which would certainly attend their disobedience to the laws of God; he gave them to understand, that they had been * far from doing an acceptable

† Josephus acquaints us, that Saul did not content himself with barely relieving Jabel, but carried on a war against the Ammonites, slew their king, laid waste their country, enriched his army with spoils, and brought the people safe and victorious to their homes again; *Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. c. 6.*

* That part of the speech, which Josephus introduces Samuel as making to the people, and complaining of their importunity for a change of government, is conceived in these terms. "—What should you chuse another king for, after the experience of so many signal mercies, and miraculous deliverances, while you were under God's protection, and owned him for your governour? You have forgotten the story of your forefather Jacob's coming into Egypt with only seventy men in his train, and purely for want of bread; how God provided for them, and, by his blessing, how they increased and multiplied. You have forgotten the slavery and oppression they groaned under, till, upon their cries and supplications for relief, God rescued them himself without the help of kings, by the hands of Moses and Aaron, who

able thing to God, in rejecting his government, and desiring a king; and (that they might not think that he mentioned this out of any prejudice, or indeed without a divine direction) he gave them this sign: — That God would immediately send a storm of thunder and rain, which, in the † time of wheat and harvest, (as it was then) was a thing very unusual; and this coming to pass according to his prediction, so terrified the people, that they acknowledged their offence, and intreated Samuel to intercede for them; which he not only promised them to do, but to assist them likewise with his best instructions, so long as they adhered to the observation of God's laws; but if they despised them, they were to expect to be destroyed, both they and their king.

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

After this victory over the Ammonites, Saul, in the second year of his reign, disbanded all his army, except three thousand men, two of which he kept for his body-guard, and the other thousand were to attend his son Jonathan; who, being a prince of great bravery, had taken an oppor-

Saul's victory over the Philistines.

“ who brought them out of Egypt into the land you are now
“ possessed of. How can you then be so ungrateful now, after
“ so many blessings and benefits received, as to depart from
“ the reverence and allegiance you owe to so powerful and
“ so merciful a protector? How often have you been delivered
“ up into the hands of your enemies for your apostacy and dis-
“ obedience, and as often afterward restored to God's favour,
“ and your liberty, upon your humiliation and repentance?
“ Who was it but God, that gave you victory first over the As-
“ syrians, then over the Ammonites, and then over the Moab-
“ ites, and last of all over the Philistines, not by the influence
“ and direction of kings, but under the conduct of Jephthah
“ and Gideon? What madness has possessed you then, to a-
“ bandon an heavenly governor for an earthly?” &c.; *Jewish*
Antiq. lib. vi. c. 6.

† It is an observation of St. Jerom, that this harvest in Judea began about the end of June, or the beginning of July, in which season thunder and rain were never known, but only in the spring and autumn, the one called *the former*, and the other *the latter rain*; and therefore Samuel, by this preamble, *Is it not wheat harvest to day?* chap. xii. 17. meant to signify the greatness of the miracle God was going to work; that he could, in an instant, and in a time when they least of all expected it, deprive them of all the comforts of life, as they justly deserved, for their rejecting him and his prophet, who was so powerful with him, as by his prayers, to produce such wonders; *Patrick's, Calmet's, and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Chris.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

tunity, and cut off a garrison of the Philistines in † Geba, which in effect was a declaration of war.

The Philistines, upon this occasion, raised a very powerful army, which consisted of ‡ three thousand chariots, six thousand horse, and a multitude of foot almost innumerable, and came and incamped at ‡ Michmash. The
Israelitish

† Among the cities of Benjamin, mentioned in Joshua xviii. 24, &c. we read of Gaba, Gibeah, and Gibeon; and in Joshua xxi. 17. we read, that the two cities given to the children of Aaron, out of the tribe of Benjamin, were Gibeon and Geba; whence it is not to be doubted, but that Gaba, mentioned in the 18th chapter, was the same with Geba, that we read of in chap. 21. But then it will noways follow, that this Geba, or Gaba, is the same with Gibeah, because this Gibeah was the royal city where Saul dwelt, and is therefore expressly called *Gibeah of Saul*; and for that reason it cannot be supposed, that the Philistines, at this time, had a garrison there; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii.

‡ The words in the original, and in our translation, are *thirty thousand*; but the Syriac and Arabic versions (which we have thought proper to follow) make them no more than three thousand: and indeed whoever considers, that Pharaoh, king of Egypt, when he had mustered all his forces together, could bring no more than six hundred of these chariots into the field; and all the other princes, whose equipages are related in Scripture, much fewer, must needs think it a thing incredible, that the Philistines, out of their small territories, which extended no farther than the two tribes of Simeon and Dan, along the coasts of the Mediterranean sea, could ever be able to raise so vast an armament; no, nor all the nations that they could possibly call in to their assistance. For besides that, in the account of all armies, the cavalry is always more numerous than the chariots of war, (which is different here), the largest armies that we ever read of were able to compass a very few of these chariots, in comparison of the number here specified. Mithridates, in his vast army, had but a hundred; Darius had but two; and Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Mac. xiii. 2.) but three. So that we must either say, that the transcribers made a mistake in the Hebrew copy, or (with some other commentators) suppose, that this thirty thousand chariots, were not chariots of war, but most of them carriages only, for the conveyance of the baggage belonging to such a vast multitude of men, or for the deportation of the plunder they hoped to be masters of by having conquered the country; *Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Universal History*.

† Eusebius and St. Jerom inform us, that in their time, there was a large town of this name, lying about nine miles from Jerusalem,

Israelitish army, which was to rendezvous at Gilgal, came in but very slowly, and of those that did, several were so faint-hearted, as to hide themselves in the rocks and caves; and others, thinking themselves never safe enough, retired even beyond the Jordan. The truth is, that both prince and people were sadly intimidated, because Samuel, whose company at this juncture was impatiently expected, was not yet come; so that the king, fearing that the enemy would fall upon him before he had made his addresses to God for success, ordered sacrifices to be made; and the burnt-offering was just finished, when news was brought him that Samuel was arrived.

Samuel had told him beforehand, that, by the expiration of seven days, he would not fail to meet him at Gilgal; and therefore, being offended at his diffidence and impatience, he not only sharply rebuked him, but declared likewise that God, by this way of proceeding, would in time be provoked to remove the kingdom from him and his posterity, and give it to another that better deserved it; and so having left Gilgal, he went to Gibeah, whither Saul and his son Jonathan followed him, with a small army of about six thousand, and these so badly provided for action, that they had no manner of weapons, but what they could make out of their working tools, because the Philistines would not, at that time * permit so much as a smith to live among them.

While

Jerusalem, near Ramah; and the text tells us, that it was eastward from Beth-aven. Now, Beth-aven, which signifies the house of iniquity, is supposed to be the same with Bethel, and was so called, after that Jeroboam the son of Nebat had set up his golden calves to be worshipped here: But as Bethel lay to the east of Michmash, and not Michmash to the east of Bethel, as the text seems to say, the translation should be, that they incamped at Michmash, having Beth-aven on the east, i. e. they seized on that post which Saul had before in Michmash, on Mount Bethel, ver. 2.; Calmet's Comment.

* The precaution which the Philistines took to hinder the Israelites from providing themselves with weapons, is no more than what other conquerors have done to the nations they have vanquished. Persenna, when he made peace with the Romans, restrained them from the use of all iron but what was necessary in the tillage of their ground. Cyrus when he subdued the Lydians, for fear of a revolt, took from them the use of arms, and instead of a laborious life spent

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

While the Philistine army lay at Michmash, they sent out parties several ways to ravage the country, and met with no manner of opposition; till Jonathan, accompanied with his † armour-bearer only, found means to ascend a steep rock, where the enemy least of all expected an invasion, and so falling upon them unawares, in a short

in war, suffered them to sink into softness and luxury, so that they soon lost their ancient valour: And (to instance in one prince more) Nebuchadnezzar, when he had made himself master of Judea, took along with him into *Babylon all the craftsmen and smiths, that the poorest of the people, which he left behind, might be in no condition to rebel*, 2 Kings xxiv. 14. The only wonder is, why the Israelites, after they had regained their liberty, under the government of Samuel, and given the Philistines so total an overthrow at Eben-ezer, did not restore these artificers, and so provide themselves with proper arms against the next occasion? But besides the extreme sloth and negligence which appears in the Israelites whole conduct during this period, it was not so easy a matter, in so short a time, to recover a trade that was lost; especially among a people that had no iron mines, and were so wholly addicted to the feeding of cattle, that they made no account of any mechanical art. In the famous victory which they gained over Sisera, we are told, that *there was not a shield or spear seen among fifty thousand men of Israel*, Jud. v. 8.; but notwithstanding this, they had bows and arrows, and slings, which the men of Gibeah could manage to a wonderful advantage, Judg. xx. 16. And besides, the Israelites, upon this occasion, might convert their instruments of husbandry, their hatchets, their spades, their forks, their mattocks, &c. into instruments of war; a much better shift than what we read of some, who, in ancient times, had no other arms than clubs and sharpened stakes, hardened in the fire.

— Non jam certamine agresti

Stipitibus duris agitur, sudibusque præstitis.

Virgil. Æneid. 7.

† This action of Jonathan's, considered in itself, was doubtless a very rash attempt, and contrary to the laws of war, which prohibit all under command (as he was) from engaging the enemy, or entering upon any enterprize, without the general's order; but what may very justly be said in excuse of it is,—That he had a divine incitation to it, which he might probably feel upon the sight of the Philistines appearing as if they intended to assault Gibeah, and upon the information which he might receive of the great spoil which the three parties made of the poor people in the country; *Patrick's Commentary*.

time killed about twenty of them; which put the rest † in-
to such a consternation, that mistrusting friends for foes, A. M. 2888, &c. Ant Christ. 1116, &c. from 1 Sam. i. to the end. they began to slaughter and destroy one another. Saul had soon intelligence of this disorder in the enemies camp, and therefore willing to make the most of such an opportunity, he got together what forces he could, and fell upon the Philistines with such fury, that he totally routed and defeated them.

In the heat of the chace, he caused proclamation to be made, that, upon pain of death, none should dare to eat any thing until it was night, that the slaughter of the enemy might not be retarded. But herein he defeated his own purpose; for the people, for want of refreshment, grew faint in the pursuit, so that the enemy escaped into their own country: And what was another grievous consequence of this interdict, his son Jonathan, who had been absent when the proclamation was made, had like to have fallen a sacrifice to his father's rash vow, * merely for eating a little honey, when he was ready to die with hunger,

† How two men could put the whole army into a consternation, may seem somewhat extraordinary; but it should be considered, that Jonathan and his armour-bearer, climbing up a way that was never attempted before, might come upon them unawares, and surprise them: that this action might happen, as Josephus thinks, early in the morning, when a great part of the Philistines army was asleep; that even, had they been all awake, Jonathan might have so posted himself, (as Horatius Cocles did on a bridge), as to be able to maintain his pass against all the force of the enemy; that those who made at him, (as only one perhaps could at a time), he with one stroke might lay flat on the ground, and his armour-bearer immediately dispatch them; that the rest, seeing them act thus intrepidly, might take them for two scouts, or van-curriers only of a great army that was coming up and ready to fall upon them; that the army of the Philistines, being made up of different nations, might be in the greater confusion, as either not understanding, or else suspecting one another; and (what might complete their consternation) that God at this time might send a panic fear upon them, which, whenever he does it, even in the opinion of Heathens themselves, is enough to make the stoutest tremble, and the most heroic spirits betake themselves to flight.

Ἐν γὰρ δαιμονίοισι φόβοις
Φεύγοντας καὶ παῖδες θεῶν.

Pind. Nemea 9.

* When Saul told his son Jonathan, that for eating this honey, contrary to his interdict he should surely die, *because the reverence which he had for his vow, was more to him than all the kindred and tenderneſs*

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

ger, had not the people interposed, and pleaded the merit of that young prince, to whom the honour of the day was chiefly owing.

After this victory, Saul ruled the kingdom with an higher hand, and repulsed his enemies wherever they assailed him. He had indeed a very large and flourishing family. Abinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz, was his wife; Jonathan, Ishui, and Melchishua, were his sons; Michael and Merab his daughters; Abner, his cousin-german, was general of his forces; and as himself was a warlike prince, God made choice of him to put in execution a sentence, (b) which, for many years before, he had decreed against the Amalekites, for their opposing the Israelites in their passage out of the land of Egypt.

And over
the Amale-
kites; but
his disobe-
dience in
not destroy-
ing them all

His commission was utterly to destroy the Amalekites, men, women, and children, and to leave not so much as one creature of any kind alive: But instead of executing this according to the letter of the precept, * he saved Agag their king, and the best of the cattle alive; and when

tendernefs of nature, Josephus introduces the son making his father an answer not unlike that which Jephthah's daughter, upon a like occasion, returned to him: "That death (says he) shall be well come to me, which acquits my father of the obligation of a religious vow, and only befalls me, in consequence of so glorious a victory to him that gave me being. I have lived long enough, since I have lived to see the pride and insolence of the Philistines brought down by the Hebrews, which will serve me for a consolation in all my other sufferings." And the historian tells us farther, that the whole multitude was so charmed with the piety and bravery of the young man, that in an extasy of tenderness and compassion, they took him away out of the hands of his incensed father, with an oath, *that they would not suffer an hair of that person's head to be touched, who had been so instrumental in a victory that tended to the preservation of them all*; Antiq. lib. vi. c. 7.

(b) Vid. Exod. xvii. 8. &c. and Deut. xxv. 17, &c.

* Josephus seems to hint, that Saul saved this Amalekite king alive, because he was taken with the comeliness and majesty of his person; but others rather think, that he intended him to decorate his triumph. For when it is said of Saul, that he came to Carmel after his victory, and *set him up a place*, 1 Sam. xv. 12. the word *ʃab*, they say, will signify *an arch*, as well as any thing else; and thence they conclude, that Saul's purpose was to erect a triumphal arch, in memory of his defeat of the Amalekites; and that he kept their king alive to be led captive in that magnificent procession, wherein he was to make a display of his victory; *Calmet's Commentary*.

Samuel

Samuel came to expostulate the matter with him, his presence was, that what he had spared was in pure respect to God, in order to have them offered to him in sacrifice. But Samuel, who knew very well that this reserve was made out of a principle of avarice more than devotion, first laid before him the iniquity of his conduct, and then declared to him God's immoveable purpose of alienating the kingdom from his family; which made so deep an impression upon him, that he acknowledged his fault, intreated the prophet, who was going abruptly to leave him, to stay and make intercession for him, and so far to honour him before the people, (from whom he apprehended a revolt), as to join with him in worship to God, which Samuel consented to do: But before he departed, he ordered Agag, who by this time began to hope for mercy, to be brought forth to him, and himself, with his own hands, fell upon him, and slew him.

This was the last interview which Samuel had with Saul; for, after this action, he retired to his house at Ramah, where, though he visited Saul no more, he ceased not to lament the sad condition into which he was fallen. It was not long however, before God awoke him out of his pensive mood, and sent him to Bethlehem, under colour of sacrificing there, to anoint David, the son of Jesse, king and successor to Saul. Jesse had eight sons, and when Samuel came to his house, seven of them were brought before him. Eliab, the eldest was a goodly personage, and him the prophet supposed, at first sight, to have been the person whom God had pitched upon to succeed Saul; but being instructed otherwise, and upon inquiry, finding that Jesse had another son, who at that time was in the fields keeping the sheep, he ordered him to be sent for; and as he was a very fair and beautiful youth, immediately upon his entering the room, he perceived that he was the person whom God had made choice of; and accordingly he took an opportunity, and † singling him out from the rest of his brethren, poured oil

† Our translation says, that *Samuel anointed him in the midst of his brethren*, and for this it is pretended, that as this unction was a solemn act, and the only title which David had to the kingdom, it was necessary to have it done in the presence of some witnesses, for which purpose none were more proper than those of his own family. But it is plain from his brother Eliab's treating him after this,

A. M. oil on his head, and anointed him king. Nor was the ceremony useless; for, from that time forward, David found himself inwardly possessed with a spirit of wisdom, and prudence, and courage, and other qualifications both of body and mind that are requisite in a prince *.

Saul grows melancholy and sends for David to play to him. Saul, in the mean time, declined more and more in the favour of God; and as he was naturally of a timorous and suspicious temper, an unhappy turn of mind grew upon him, and settled at last in a confirmed melancholy, but such an one as was frequently attended with violent perturbations, and sometimes with direct frenzy. In this condition, some of his courtiers advised him to music, which would be of some use to lull his disturbed mind to rest; and accordingly recommended David, not only as an excellent master this way, but a man of other rare qualifications, both internal and external, enough to engage his favour.

Upon this recommendation he was sent for to court, where Saul was greatly taken with the beauty of his per-

this, 1 Sam. xvii. 28. that he was not privy to his being anointed king-elect over God's people; and therefore, since the words will equally bear the sense of *from the midst*, as well as *in the midst of his brethren*, it is more reasonable to suppose, that as this was the ceremony of his designation to the kingdom only, few or none (except his father perhaps) were admitted to it. And there was the less reason for witnesses upon this occasion, because David never laid claim to the crown till after Saul's decease, and was then, at two several times, 1st, when he was made king over the tribe of Judah, and 2d, when made king over all the tribes of Israel, anointed publicly; *Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*, and *Howell's History*, in the notes.

* They who credit the Scripture-history in this affair, will easily account for these extraordinary accomplishments and improvements; for that assures us, *that the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward*, 1 Sam. xvi. 13. and I should be glad to learn from those who do not credit this circumstance of the history in the strict sense of the text, how otherwise they can account for these extraordinary effects and endowments which immediately ensued David's designation to the throne; how a designation to empire, I say, which, in its ordinary course, is too apt to corrupt, debase, and overset with vanity, should raise an obscure youth, uneducated, and little accounted of, even in the esteem of a parent's partiality, in an obscure age and country, without the advantage either of instruction or example, into the greatest musician, the noblest poet, and most consummate hero of all antiquity; *The life of David* by the author of *Revelation examined*.

son,

son; but when he heard him exercise his skill upon the harp, he was pleased above measure, and quite transported from all uneasy and melancholic thoughts. Saul, in short, conceived such a kindness for David for having cured him of his malady, that he made him one of his armour-bearers, though David, when he found the king better, returned to his father's house again.

The Philistines not long before had received a remarkable defeat from Saul; but having now recruited their forces, they came and encamped between † Succoth and Azekah, while Saul, with his army, took ground upon the hill that is above the valley of Elah, which separated the two camps. While the armies lay thus facing each other, a champion named *Goliath*, of a prodigious gigantic stature, * being full ten feet high, with arms and armour proportionable,

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
into the en-
t.

David slays
the cham-
pion Goli-
ath.

† Succoth and Azekah lay to the south of Jerusalem, and the east of Bethlehem, about four leagues from the former, and five from the latter; and the ancient valley of Elah must consequently lie not far distant from them; though later travellers place it at no more than a league's distance from Jerusalem; *Calmet's Com.*

* The words in the text are, — *Whose height was six cubits and a span*; so that taking a cubit to be twenty inches and a half, and a span three inches, and a little more, the whole will amount to about twelve feet and an half: A stature above as tall again as usual. The lowest computation of the cubit however brings it to near ten feet, which is the standard that we have set it at; though it must not be dissembled, that both the Septuagint and Josephus have reduced it to little more than eight feet, which but badly comports with the weight and vastness of his armour, though it might suit their design perhaps, in accommodating their account to the credibility of their Heathen readers. But be that as it will, several authors (to shew this vast size of the man not to be beyond the bounds of probability) have written, *ex professo*, *De gigantibus*; among whom Hermannus Conringius, in his book *De antiquo statu Holmstadii*, and in another *De habitu corporum Germanorum*, have demonstrated, that the ancient Germans were of a vast size, even as Cæsar, *De bello Gall.* testifies of them, by calling them *immani corporum magnitudine homines*, men of a huge greatness of body. Nay, even Josephus himself, who is quoted for denying the existence of giants, furnishes us with an argument in their behalf, when he gives us an account of some bones of a prodigious size which were found in Hebron; as Acosta, in his history of the Indies, lib. i. c. 10. makes mention of bones of an incredible bigness, and of a race of giants of such an height, that an ordinary man

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

proportionable, came out of the camp of the Philistines for forty days successively, and challenged any one of the Israelites to a single combat. * This single combat was to decide the fate of the war: But none of the Israelites durst adventure upon it, until David, who happened at this time to come to the camp, † with provisions for his three elder

could scarce reach their knees; *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Comm.* *Calmet's Dict.* under the word *Goliath*; and *Diff. of the giants*.

* The words in which Goliath's challenge is expressed, are these,
— *Why are you come out to set your battle in array? Am I not a Philistine, and you servants to Saul? Chuse you a man for you, and let him come down to me: If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: But if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us,* 1 Sam. xvii.

8. Antiquity furnishes with examples of several such like combats, as Goliath here proposes, but with none more remarkable, than that between the Horatii and Curiatii, related by Livy, lib. i. c. 23. "In which case (as Grotius expresses himself, *De jure belli et pacis*, lib. ii. c. 23.) though the champions perhaps cannot, with all the innocence imaginable, engage in the combat, yet their respective states may, at least, allow of it, as a less evil; as an expedient whereby a decision is made, (without the effusion of much blood, or any considerable loss on either side), which of the two nations shall have the dominion over the other. Strabo (says he) makes mention of this as an ancient custom among the Greeks; and Æneas appeals to the Latins, whether it is not highly just and equitable, that he and Turnus should determine the controversy between them in this manner." But whether ever there was any combat stipulated to be decisive of the quarrel between two contending nations, it is certain that this speech of Goliath's was a mere bravado, proceeding from a high opinion he had of his own matchless strength, as if he had been the whole support of the nation, which was to stand or fall together with him. For that he had no authority from the princes of the Philistines to make any such declaration, is evident from the event; since, so far were the Philistines from yielding themselves slaves to the Hebrews, upon the death of this champion, that they made the best of their way into their own country, and there defended themselves, and fought many battles with them afterwards; *Saurin's Dissert.* vol. iv. *dissert.* 32.; and *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

† In those days it was customary for men to serve their king and country in the wars at their own expence; and therefore Jesse sent a supply of provisions to such of his sons as were in the service: But since he had other sons at home, while David was chiefly in the fields, it seems to have been a Divine direction that he sent him from the sheep upon this errand.

brethren

brethren, that were then in the service, seeing this great gigantic creature thus vant himself, and hearing withal what reward the king had promised to the person that should kill him, viz: that he † would give him his daughter in marriage and ennoble his family, was moved by a divine impulse to accept of the challenge, which he some ways discovered to the standers by. His eldest brother Eliab, hearing such words drop from him, took him, and reproved him for his rashness; but as his declaration, by this time, had reached the king's ears, the king sent for him, and having surveyed his youth, told him with concern, that he feared he would never be able to encounter a man that was so much older and stronger, and a soldier from his cradle. * But to this David replied, that he had already done as great things as killing this giant could possibly be; that he had slain a lion and a bear with his bare hands: and therefore did not doubt, but that the same almighty power which delivered him then, would not fail to shield and protect him now:

Saul was not a little pleased with this gallant answer; and to equip him as well as he could for the combat, offered him his own armour: but when David had put it on, he found it too large and cumbersome: And therefore, taking only his staff, a sling, and † five smooth stones, which he

† This was no bad policy in Saul to promise largely upon so important an occasion, soasmuch as Caleb won Kirjath-sepher, by offering his daughter in marriage to the person that should take it; and David himself, when he came to the crown, encouraged his soldiers to assault the strong fort of Sion, by promising to make him commander in chief of all his forces who should first enter it; *Patrick's Commentary*.

* Josephus introduces David as reasoning with the king in this manner:—"David perceiving (says he) that Saul took his measures from the common reason of other encounters, gave the king to understand, That this was not so much a challenge to the army, as a defiance to heaven itself; neither was the combat to be taken, in truth, for a trial of skill between Goliath and David, but between Goliath and the Lord of hosts. For it is not my arm, (says he) that fights the battle, but the power of a gracious and invincible God, that many times brings to pass, even by the weakest instruments, the noblest of his divine purposes, for his greater glory;" *Jewish Antiq lib. 6. c. 10.*

† Smooth stones, one would think, part best from the sling, and as they meet with the least obstruction from the air, fly with the greatest

A. M. 2888, etc.
Ant. Chris. 1116, etc.
from 1 Sam. i. to the end.

he picked out of the brook that ran by, he advanced towards the Philistine, who perceiving him to be but a youth, and of a fair effeminate complexion, took the thing as done in contempt and derision of him ; and therefore he cursed him by his gods, Dagon and Ashtaroth, and vowed to cut him in pieces, the very moment he came at him. But David's reply was of another kind, *viz.* that he came against him, not in any confidence of his own strength, but in the name of that God whose name he had blasphemed, and power defied : And with these words he let fly a stone at him, with such force and direction, that it hit him on his forehead, and † piercing his brain, sunk into it ; so that he fell flat on his face, and David ran up to him, and with the giant's sword cut off his head ; at

greatest rapidity, and in the most direct line ; and yet Ludovicus de Dieu, is of a quite contrary opinion, *viz.* that rough and sharp stones were properer for David's purpose ; whereupon he translates the words, *five pieces of stone*, as the Hebrew indeed, without its punctuation, will bear. But it is in vain to be nice and elaborate about trifles, since of what form soever the stone which penetrated Goliath's forehead was, it is plain, that it had both the direction and rapidity of its motion from the hand of God.

† If it should be asked, how this could possibly be, when Goliath was armed so completely, and in particular, is said to have had an *helmet of brass upon his head* ? It is but supposing that this arrogant champion, in disdain of his inferior combatant, might come negligently towards him, with his helmet turned back, and his forehead bare. It is highly probable, that when he made his menacing speech to David, he might turn back his helmet, both to speak and be heard more distinctly, and there was no such terror in David's appearance, as might induce him to cover his forehead again. But admitting he did, it is but supposing that David levelled his stone so right as to hit the place which was left open for his adversary's eyes, or threw it with such a violent force, as would penetrate both helmet and head together. To make these suppositions more probable, we need only remember what we read in Judges, chap. xx. 16, of no less than *seven hundred men* in one place, who were so expert with their left hands, that every one could sling stones to an hair's breadth and not miss ; or what we read in Diodorus Siculus, l. v. of some slingers, who threw stones with such violence, that nothing could resist their impression ; and that when they made use of lead instead of stone, the very lead would melt in the air, as it flew, by reason of the rapidity of the motion which they gave it ; *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

the fight of which the Philistines army fled, and were pursued by the Hebrews as far as the gates of Ekron with a very great slaughter.

When Saul saw David marching against the Philistines, he inquired of Abner, who he was? which Abner could not resolve him; but upon his return from victory, introduced him to the king, with the champion's head in his hand. The king received him with the highest applause; and, upon his inquiry, David informed him, that he was the son of Jesse the Bethlehemite. Every one entertained indeed an high conception for the author of so great an action, but none expressed so entire a satisfaction as did Jonathan; who, being himself a prince of extraordinary bravery, was so taken with his courage and conduct in this engagement, that he * contracted the tenderest and most endearing friendship with him, which lasted as long as they two lived together; but in their return home from this expedition, one thing happened which occasioned Saul's jealousy. Among the crowds that came out to meet them, and to grace their triumph, there was a chorus of women, who sung to the musical instruments upon which they played, a certain song, whose chief burthen was, *Saul hath slain his thousands, and † David his ten thousands*; which so enraged Saul against David, that from that time he never looked on him with a gracious eye. For though he thought proper to retain him in his service, and for the present conferred on him some command in the army; yet the reward for his killing Goliath, which was to be the marriage of his eldest daughter, † he deprived him of by giving her to another.

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.
Saul grows
jealous of
David, and
attempts his
life several
ways.

When

* Plutarch (in his book *περὶ Πολυφιλίας*) makes mention of several great men, such as Theseus and Pirithous; Achilles and Patroclus; Orestes and Pylades; Pythias and Damon, &c. who were joined together in the yoke of friendship, as he calls it: but none of these were comparable to what we read of Jonathan and David, who entered into the most sacred bonds of mutual assistance and defence, to their very death, and of kindness to their posterity, even after either of them should be dead. Jonathan, in particular, through the whole story, shows towards David such a greatness of soul, such a constancy of mind, and disinterestedness of heart, as few romances can produce examples of; *Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

† *Viz.* in his killing Goliath; for all the conquest gained afterwards was no more than the consequence of his death.

† This was an high affront to David, and one of the greatest injuries that could be done him; however, for the present, he thought

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Chriſt.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

When Saul returned to his own houſe, the ſame ſpirit of melancholy came upon him as before ; and while David was touching his harp before him as uſual, in order to alleviate his malady, the outrageous king threw a javelin at him with ſuch fury, as would certainly have deſtroyed him; had not providence turned it aſide. Hereupon David thought proper to withdraw ; yet Saul would ſtill continue him in his ſervice to have the more opportunities againſt his life.

It happened too, that by this time his ſecond daughter (whoſe name was *Michael*) had entertained kind thoughts of David, which her father was not unconſcious of ; and therefore he ſignified to him, that upon condition he would kill him an hundred Philiftines, (but not without ſome hopes of himſelf falling in the attempt), he ſhould have the honour to become the king's ſon-in-law. David accepted the condition, though he could not but perceive the latent malice of it ; and taking ſome choice men along with him, invaded the Philiftines, ſlew double the number of them, and for a teſtimony thereof †, ſent their foreſkins (according to covenant) to the king ; ſo that, all things being thus gallantly accompliſhed, and in ſo public a manner, the king could not reſuſe him his daughter, but at the ſame time laid many other ſchemes to take away his life.

thought proper to diſſemble it. How Jonathan reſented this uſage, we are no where told. It is likely, that his duty to his father made him prevail with David to take it patiently, as coming from a man who was ſometimes beſide himſelf, and knew not well what he did : and that David might be the more inclinable to do this, as having ſome intimations given him of the good eſteem which the ſecond daughter began to entertain of him ; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The reaſon why Saul exacted the foreſkins of David was, to prevent all cheat or colluſion in the matter, and that he might be ſure they were Philiftines only whom he killed. Had he demanded the heads only of ſo many men, David (he might think) might perhaps cut off thoſe of his own ſubjects, and bring them inſtead of the Philiftines : but now, the Philiftines being the only neighbouring people who were uncircumciſed, (for the Arabians, as deſcended from Iſhmael, and all the other nations which ſprung from Eſau, were circumciſed, as well as the Hebrews), in producing their foreſkins there could be no deception. Beſides that, this would be a groſs inſult upon the Philiftines in general, to whom Saul was deſirous to make David as odious as poſſible, that, at one time or other he might fall into their hands ; *Calmét's Commentary*.

Nay,

Nay, to such desperate lengths did his jealousy run him, that he, casting off all disguise, † commanded his son Jonathan, and some of the principal men of his court, at any rate to dispatch David ; which Jonathan all along took care to acquaint him with, and at the same time, advised him to provide himself with some place of safe retreat, until he should have an opportunity of * expostulating the matter with his father ; which accordingly he did, and with so good success, that his father was (seemingly at least) reconciled to David ; and Jonathan next day introduced him into his presence : but the increase of David's fame, upon several defeats given the Philistines, still renewing and in-

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

David makes his escape, and while Saul is among the prophets, visits his friend Jonathan.

† It is strange, that Saul should speak to Jonathan to murder David, if he knew the friendship he had for him ; and he could not be ignorant of it, since (in 1 Sam. xviii. 3, 4.) he had made so public a declaration of it. But he imagined perhaps, that his love to a father would overcome his love to a friend ; and (taking an estimate from himself) might think it no mean incitement to his son, that David was going to deprive not only the father of the present possession, but the son likewise of the right of succession to the throne of Israel. But whatever Saul's reasons might be for desiring Jonathan's assistance in so vile a fact, it is plain, that there was a peculiar providence of God in his disclosing himself so freely on this head, since thereby David came to a right information of his danger ; *Patrick's Commentary*.

* The speech which Josephus puts in Jonathan's mouth upon this occasion, is expressed in these terms :—“ You have conceived, Sir, a terrible displeasure against this young man, and given orders for his death ; but upon what provocation, or for what fault, great or little, I cannot apprehend. He is a person to whom we stand indebted for our safety, and the destruction of the Philistines ; for vindicating the honour of our nation from the scandal of a forty days affront, in the challenge of a giant, whom not a creature, but this innocent youth, had a heart to encounter ; a person who purchased my sister for his wife at your own price : and, in fine, a person intitled to your esteem and tenderness, both as a brave man, and a member of your own family. Be pleased to consider then, what injury you do your own daughter in making her feel the mortification of being a widow, before she enjoys the blessing of being a mother. Be pleased to remember who it was that cured you of your dark melancholic fits, and by that means laid an obligation upon the whole family ; and who it was that (next under God) delivered us from our implacable enemies. These, Sir, are benefits never to be forgotten, without the infamy of the blackest ingratitude ;” *Jewish Antiqu.* l. vi. c. 13.

creasing

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

creasing, Saul's jealousy would not suffer this reconciliation to last long. Saul was taken with another fit of frenzy, and David was desired to play to him : but while he was employed in tuning his harp, the other took an opportunity (as he had done before) of darting a javelin at him, which David, having a watchful eye upon him, nimbly declined, and so retired to his own house. Thither the king sent his guards, as soon as it was light, to apprehend him ; but by the contrivance of his wife Michal (who let him down from a window) he made his escape, and by the benefit of a dark night, came to his old friend Samuel at Ramah ; to whom he told all his complaints, and with whom (for the better security of his person) he went to Najoh, which was * a school or college of the prophets, and there dwelt.

* When these schools of the prophets were at first instituted is no where indicated in Scripture : but as the first mention we find of them is in Samuel's time, we can hardly suppose, that they were much prior to it. It may be presumed therefore, that the sad degeneracy of the priesthood, at first occasioned the institution of these places, for the better education of those that were to succeed in the sacred ministry, whether as prophets or priests. According to the places that are specified in Scripture, (1 Sam. x. 5, 10. and xix. 20. 2 Kings ii. 5. iv. 38. and xxii. 14.), they were first erected in the cities of the Levites, which, for the more convenient instruction of the people, were dispersed up and down in the several tribes of Israel. In these places the prophets had convenient colleges built (whereof Najoh seems to be one) for their abode ; and living in communities, had some one of distinguished note (very probably by divine election) set over them to be their head or president. Here it was, that they studied the law, and learned to expound the several precepts of it. Here it was, that, by previous exercise, they qualified themselves for the reception of the spirit of prophecy, whenever it should please God to send it upon them. Here it was, that they were instructed in the sacred art of psalmody, or (as the Scripture calls it, 1 Chron. xxv. 1. 7.) in *prophecy with harps, with psalteries, and cymbals*. And hence it was, that when any blessings were to be promised, judgments denounced, or extraordinary events predicted, the messengers were generally chosen : so that these colleges were seminaries of divine knowledge, and nurseries of that race of prophets which succeeded from Samuel to the time of Malachi ; *Stillingfleet's Orig. sacræ* ; *Wheatly on the Schools of the prophet's* ; and *Jacob Abting, De repub. Heb.*

It was not long before Saul had intelligence of his abode, and † sent a party of soldiers to apprehend him; but they, upon their arrival at the place, where they found Samuel teaching and instructing the younger prophets, were seized with a prophetic spirit, and returned not again. After these, he sent fresh messengers, and after them others again; but no sooner were they come within the verge of the place, but they all began to be affected in like manner. Saul at length, impatient of these delays, went himself; but as he drew near to Najoh, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, so that he went along † prophesying, until he came to the place where Samuel and David were, and there † stripping himself of his upper garments, he lay (as it were in an extasy) almost naked on the ground, all that day and the next night.

David

† Such was Saul's implacable hatred to David, that it had abolished, not only all respect and reverence to Samuel, (under whose protection David then was) but all regard likewise to the college of the prophets, which in those days had obtained the privilege of a sanctuary: *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Grotius de jure belli et pacis*, l. iii. c. 11.

† This is a word of an extensive signification, and may denote sometimes such actions, motions, and distortions, as prophets, in their inspirations, are wont to express.

Incerta qualis entheos cursus tulit,

Cum jam recepto Mænas insanit Deo. Sen. in *Medea*. which perhaps may be very justly applied to Saul upon this occasion. But the generality of interpreters, in this place, take *prophesying* to signify Saul's singing of psalms, or hymns of thanksgiving and praise, which even against his will he was compelled to do, to teach him the vanity of his designs against David, and that in them he fought against God himself; *Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Sam. xviii. 10.; and *Pool's Annot.* on xix. 23.

‡ The words in our translation are, — *And he stript off his cloaths also, and lay down naked, all that day, and that night*, 1 Sam. xix. 24. In which words, and some other portions of the like import, we are not to imagine that the persons there spoken of were entirely naked, but only that they were divested of some external habit or other, which, upon certain occasions, they might lay aside. For whereas it is said of some prophets, Isa. xx. 2. and Mic. i. 8. that they went about naked, we can hardly think that they could be guilty of so much indecency, and especially by the express order of God, who had always testified his abhorrence of nudity, and enjoined his priests the use of several garments to cover the body, that thus they might be distinguished from the Pagan

A. M.
2838, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
1, to the end.

David took this opportunity to make a private visit to his friend Jonathan, with whom he expostulated his father's unkindness, which the other could no ways excuse, only he assured him of his best * offices; that he would make what discovery he could of his father's designs against him, and not fail to acquaint him with them. In the mean time he renewed the league of friendship that was between them, and directed him where to conceal himself for a day or two, until he could learn, whether it was proper for him to appear or no; which he was to signify to him by

priests, who were not ashamed to appear naked. The words in the original therefore, which we render *naked*, or *to be naked*, signify no more, than either to have part of the body uncovered, or to be without a gown or upper garment, which the Romans called *toga*, and (according to the custom of the eastern people) was wont to be put on when they went abroad, or made any public appearance. And therefore it was some such vestment as this, or perhaps his military accoutrements, which Saul, upon this occasion, put off; and that this was enough to denominate him naked, is manifest from what Aurelius Victor, speaking of those who were sent to Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, to bring him to the senate to be made dictator, says, That they found him naked, plowing on the other side of the Tyber; whereas Livy, who relates the same story, observes, that he called to his wife Rucca for his gown or *toga*, that he might appear fit to keep them company; *Essay towards a new translation.*

* The speech which Josephus puts in Jonathan's mouth, upon this occasion, is very tender and pathetic:—"That God, who fills and governs the universe, and knows the thoughts of my heart, in the very conception of them; that God, (says he), be witness to the faith that is vowed and promised betwixt us; and that I will never give over searching into, and sifting the private deliberations and purposes of my father, till I have discovered the bottom of his heart, and whether there be any secret rancour in his thoughts or not, that may work to your prejudice: And if I shall be able to make any thing out at last, whether it be for or against you, it shall be the first thing I do to give you information of it. The Searcher of hearts will bear me witness that this is true, and that I have ever made it my earnest prayer to Almighty God, to bless and prosper you in your person and designs; and you may assure yourself, that he will be as gracious to you for the future, as he has been hitherto, and lay all your enemies at your feet. In the mean while, pray be sure to keep these things in memory, and when I am gone, to take care of my poor children:" *Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. c. 14.*

his

his shooting some arrows, in such a manner as they concluded on, and so mutually embracing, they parted.

† The feast of the new moon was now come, which Saul returned from Najoh to celebrate; but as he observed that * David's seat at the table had for two days been empty, he inquired of Jonathan, † what was become of the son of Jesse, as he called him in contempt. Jonathan told him

A. M.
2838, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.
Who, upon
his account,
had ran the
hazard of
his life.

† The Jewish months were lunar, and never began before the moon appeared above the horizon; for which purpose there were certain persons placed upon the mountains, some time before the new moon was expected, to give notice by the sound of an horn, when it first appeared, that so the news thereof might immediately be carried to Jerusalem. But lest there should be any mistake in this method of making their observation, from this example of Saul's, it is supposed, that they celebrated this festival for two days together. Whether the Heathens had this rite from the Jews or no, it is certain, that other nations had feasts at the beginning of every month, and that, with the Romans, the Calends in particular were festival days, consecrated to Juno, to whom sacrifices at this time were offered; *Calmet's Commentary*.

* That sitting at table was an antienter custom than either lying or leaning at meat, is obvious from this passage. The Egyptians, when they eat at Joseph's entertainment, sat at table, and so did the Hebrews. Homer always introduces his heroes in this posture; and that this was the known custom among the ancient people of Italy, Virgil, in these words, testifies: Perpetuis soliti patres considerare mensis. *Æneid*. vii.

It is not to be dissembled, however, that very early, and even in the times of Saul, the use of table-beds, or beds to lie or lean upon at meals, had obtained among the Jews; for when the witch of Endor, with much entreaty prevailed with Saul to take a little refreshment, it is said, that *he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed*, 1 Sam. xxviii. 23.; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† It may seem a little strange, that Saul, who had so often endeavoured to kill David, and was now just returned from an expedition undertaken against his life, should ever expect to see him at his table any more. But he might think perhaps, that David was inclinable to overlook all that had passed, as the effect of his frenzy and melancholy; that now he had been prophesying at Najoh, he was returned to a sound mind, and become a new man; and that, because, after the first javelin darted at him, David had ventured into his presence again, he might, for the future, be guilty of the like indiscretion, *Calmet's Commentary*.

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Chriſt.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

that he had given him leave to go to an anniversary feaſt of his family at Bethlehem; whereupon Saul, ſuſpecting very probably the reality of his answer, fell into a paſſion with his ſon, and upbraided him with his friendſhip for David; which (as he told him) would prove fatal to himſelf, and injurious to his ſucceſſion; and therefore he commanded him to produce him; for reſolved he was, that this rival of theirs ſhould die. Jonathan was going to interpoſe ſomething in vindication of his friend, and the unreaſonableneſs of his father's indignation againſt him, which provoked his father to ſuch a degree, that, forgetting all ties of paternal love, † he threw a javelin at him, with an intent to kill him. But he avoided the blow, and retired; and the next morning went into the fields, under pretence of ſhooting with his bows and arrows, to give David the ſignal. To him he communicated all that had paſſed between his father and him; that his father was implacable, and determined to deſtroy him, and therefore he adviſed him to eſcape for his life: And ſo having made new proteſtations to each other of perpetual friendſhip, they embraced and parted.

David's flying from place to place for ſhelter againſt Saul.

Ever after this David was baniſhed from court, and lived in the manner of an out-law. The firſt place that he betook himſelf to was † Nob, where ſtood the tabernacle at that

† If it be asked, how it came to paſs that Saul always had a javelin or ſpear in readineſs (as on this and other occaſions) to execute his evil purpoſes? The answer is, that ſpears were the ſcepters of thoſe ages, which kings always carried in their hands. That they always carried the ſcepters in their hands appears from Homer, and that theſe ſcepters were ſpears is evident from Juſtin, (lib. xxiii. c. 3.) where, ſpeaking of the firſt age of the Romans, (which Dr. Patrick thinks was about the age of Saul), he tells us, that as yet, in theſe times, kings had ſpears as enſigns of royalty, which the Greeks called ſcepters; *The Life of David, by the author of Revelation examined.*

† There is mention made of two cities of this name, one on the eaſt, or further ſide, and the other on the weſt or hither ſide of Jordan. The generality of interpreters will have the city here ſpecified to be that which ſtood on the weſt ſide, and in the tribe of Benjamin. Tho' it is not reckoned among the number of the cities that were at firſt aſſigned to the prieſts, yet that it afterwards became one of the ſacerdotal towns, and eſpecially (as we may imagine) when the tabernacle came to be moved thither, is evident from 1 Sam. xxii. 19. and Nehem. xi.

that time, and where || Ahimelech was high-priest; but as he had no attendants, he pretended to Achimelech, that he was sent by the king upon † a business of such dispatch that he had time neither to take arms nor provision with him; A. M. 2888, &c. Ant. Christ. 1116, &c. from 1 Sam. i. to the end.

32. and some suppose it stood about four leagues from Gibeah; *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Wells's Geography of the Old Test.* vol. iii.

|| The words of our Blessed Saviour, in Mark ii. 25. are these, — *Have you never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he and they that were with him, how he went into the house of God, in the days of Abiathar, the high priest, and did eat the shew-bread, and gave also to them that were with him?*

Now there are two things which the author of this book of Samuel asserts, quite contrary to what our Saviour declares, viz. 1st, That *David was alone, and no man with him*, chap. xxxi. 1.; and 2dly, that Ahimelech was at that time high-priest; whereas our Saviour asserts, both that David had company along with him, and that Abiathar was then in the pontificate. Now, 1st, That David had company with him, and that Ahimelech knew it, is evident from his words in the fourth verse: *There is no common bread in my hand, but there is hallowed bread, if the young men have kept themselves at least from women*; and therefore Ahimelech's meaning must be, that David had no guards to attend him, as it was usual for persons of his quality to have; or at least those that were with him might be ordered to keep at a distance; and so Ahimelech (when he uttered these words) might not see them, though, when he came into closer conference with David, David might inform him, what retinue he had brought, and consequently that all the shew-bread was no more than what they wanted for their present support. 2dly, Though it be granted that the name of *high-priest*, in its strictest sense, did not at this time belong to Abiathar, yet since it is generally agreed, that he was the *Sagan*, (as the Jews of latter days call him, who is the high-priest's vicar), he might well enough, in a qualified sense, be called the *high-priest*; especially considering his immediate succession to his father, and how short his father's continuance in the office was, after this interview with David. Nor can we see any great impropriety in saying, that such a thing was done *in the days of Abiathar the high-priest*, though done somewhat before he was invested with that dignity, any more than in saying, that such things happened in the days of Henry VIII. which strictly came to pass some days before he began to reign; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† It must be owned, that David, in this pretence, did not speak direct truth, nor are we from hence to take an example for speaking lies; but one thing may be said in his excuse, that as he saw

Doeg

A. M.
2883, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

him; and therefore obtained of the high-priest * Goliath's sword, which had been deposited in the tabernacle, and some of the shew-bread, which the day before had been taken off from the golden table, and with these he proceeded to Gath, as not thinking himself safe in any part of Saul's dominions.

He had not been long in Gath, however, before he was discovered, and the king informed of his being that great man of war in Israel, who had so often defeated and destroyed the Philistines: so that, to get clear of this information, he was forced to counterfeit madness, and an epilepsy, which he did so artfully, that by this means he evaded the suspicion of the king, and made his escape to † Adullam, a town in the tribe of Judah, where his brethren and relations, together with many malecontents, and men of desperate fortunes, met him, and made up a little army of about four hundred in number.

Doeg there, who he knew would inform Saul of what passed between him and Ahimelech, his pretence of business was on purpose to furnish the high-priest (if he were called to an account) with a better apology for his reception of David, since he knew no other, but that he came express from the king: And accordingly we may observe, that Ahimelech insists on that chiefly. It is a melancholy consideration, however, that the wickedness of the world should be such, as to put even excellent men sometimes upon the necessity of lying to preserve their lives, which cannot be safe without it; *Patrick's Commentary*.

* It was an ancient custom, not only among the Jews, but the Heathens likewise, to hang up the arms that were taken from their enemies in their temples; and in conformity thereunto, the sword wherewith he cut off Goliath's head David dedicated to the Lord, and delivered to the priest, to be kept as a monument of his victory, and of the Israelites deliverance. And as it was customary to hang up arms in the temples, so when the occasions of the state required it, it was no unusual thing to take them down, and employ them in the public service; from whence came that saying of Seneca, *Pro republica plerumque templa nudant*; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† It was a town in the tribe of Judah, of some considerable note, in the days of Eusebius, and about ten miles from Eleutheropolis eastward, where was a rock of the same name, in which was a cave, naturally strong and well fortified, to which David retreated; as indeed most of the mountains of Palestine were full of caverns, whither the country-people generally betook themselves for safety in time of war; *Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries*; *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. ii.

After

After his family had thus joined him, he could not but be apprehensive, that the wrath of Saul would fall upon his aged parents, and therefore his next care was to provide them with a safe retreat; which he did by putting both himself and them under the protection of the king of Moab, who was then at enmity with Saul. And with his parents he thus continued, until the prophet Gad, who attended him, advised him to leave Moab, and to return into the land of Judah; which accordingly he did, and took up his station in the † forest of Harath, where Abiathar the priest came to him, and upon this sad occasion, brought along with him all the pontifical ornaments.

During David's short stay at Nob, Doeg, the king's principal herdsman, was there, and upon his return to court, gave Saul information of all that had passed between the high-priest Ahimelech, and David. Hereupon Saul sent for Ahimelech, and the rest of the priests, and having accused them of a conspiracy, and traitorous practices against him, (* notwithstanding all the high-priest could say, in vindication of himself and his brethren) he commanded them to be put to death. His guards, who stood by, and heard Ahimelech's

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

Who slew
Ahimelech
the high-
priest, and
divers o-
thers upon
his account.

† Both St. Jerom and Eusebius make mention of a place of this name in the tribe of Judah, lying westward of Jerusalem; of which Rabbi Solomon (upon the credit of some ancient tradition) says, that being before dry, barren, and impassable, upon David's coming, it became fruitful and irriguous, and that in the 23d psalm (where he considers God as his shepherd, who would lead him into fruitful pastures, and under his protection, keep him safe in the most dangerous scenes) he alludes to this: *He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth by the waters of comfort*: For surely it is not impossible, but that this, which was before a barren desert, might now, by a singular blessing from God upon the industry of David and his companions, become a green and well-watered pasture; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii. and *The history of David, by the author of Revelation examined*.

* The speech which Josephus draws up for the high-priest upon this occasion, is directed to Saul, and conceived in these words; "I did not receive David as your Majesty's enemy, but as the faithfullest of your friends and officers, and (what is more) in quality of your son too, and a relation in so tender a degree of affinity and alliance. For how should any body imagine that man to be your enemy, upon whom you have conferred so many honours? Or why should not I rather presume such a person, without any fur-
" the-

A. M. Ahimelech's defence, * would not undertake so barbarous
 2888, &c. an office ; but Doeg, who had been their accuser, at the
 Ant. Christ. king's command, became their executioner, and with his
 1116, &c. sacrilegious hand, slew no less than || eighty-five of them.
 from 1 Sam. Nor did Saul's bloody resentment stop here : * For sending
 i. to the end. a party to Nob, he commanded them to kill man, wo-
 man, and child, and even every living creature ; so that
 of

“ ther inquiry, to be your singular friend ? ——— He told me,
 “ that he was sent in haste by yourself, upon earnest business ; and
 “ if I had not supplied him with what he wanted, it would have re-
 “ flected an indignity upon yourself, rather than upon him. Where-
 “ fore, I hope, that the blame will not fall upon me, even though
 “ David should be found as culpable as you suspect him ; unless an
 “ act of pure compassion and humanity, abstracted from the least
 “ thought, knowledge, or imagination of any evil intention, shall
 “ be understood to make me privy to a conspiracy : For the ser-
 “ vice I did him, was matter of respect to the king's son-in-law,
 “ and the king's military officer, not to the person or interest of
 “ David ;” *Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. c. 14.*

* In this they were to be commended : But much more praise they would have deserved, if they had offered up their petitions for these innocent people ; if they had remonstrated to the king, that he was going to commit a thing that was contrary to all laws both divine and human ; and if (when they saw that neither their reasons nor petitions availed) they had looked upon this order as the effect of one of the king's distracted fits, and accordingly seized and secured him, until the priests had made their escape, and he returned to a better mind. For to stand wringing their hands, while they saw so many innocent creatures murdered, and foreign soldiers made the instruments of the king's cruelty, was much the same thing as to betray all divine and human rights merely to please a tyrant ; *Le Clerc's Commentary. Vide Josephus's Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. cap. 14.* who has, upon this occasion, a curious descant about the abuse of power in kings, when once from a low, they come to be exalted to an high station in life.

|| The Septuagint, as well as the Syrian version, makes the number of priests slain by Doeg, to be three hundred and five, and Josephus three hundred and eighty-five, which is a large variation from the Hebrew text ; *Millar's history of the church.*

* This party, as Josephus informs us, was commanded by Doeg, the vile informer and murderer, who taking some men as wicked as himself to his assistance, slew in all three hundred and eighty-five persons, and in addition to these, it is thought by some,

of all the children of Ahimelech, none escaped but Abiathar, as we said before, who came to David, and told him the dismal tidings of this massacre, which David could not but sadly condole, and in some measure look upon himself as the innocent occasion of it. However he gave Abiathar assurances of his protection, that he should share the same fate with him; and that, with his own life, he would shield him from all danger.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

While Saul was imbruing his hands in the innocent blood of his subjects, David was employing his arms in the necessary defence of his country; for hearing that the Philistines had made an incursion upon Keilah, a city of Judah, † he went, and relieved the place, repulsed the enemy with a great loss of men, and took from them a considerable booty of cattle. Saul had soon intelligence of this action; and supposing that David would now fortify himself in this strong hold, he sent an army to invest it: But David having consulted the divine oracle upon this emergency, found that the inhabitants of the place would prove perfidious to him, and therefore he left them, and retired into a wood in the † deserts of Ziph, whither Saul, for want of intelligence, could not pursue him; but his son Jonathan, having private notice sent him, went to him, and gave him all the comfort and encouragement that he could; assuring him, that his father's malice would never reach

And pursues David into several places, but is still disappointed.

some, that the Gibeonites, (upon whose account there was so sore a famine in the days of David) who might now be at Nob, in attendance upon the priests, were at this time slain. It is certain, Saul was now become a mere tyrant, and against those poor people acted more cruelly than he did against the Amalekites, some of whom he spared, even contrary to God's command; but in this case he let none escape, on purpose to deter others from giving the least shelter or assistance to David, and to incite them the rather to come and give him information wherever his haunts or lurking-places were; *Josephus's Antiq. lib. 6. c. 14.*

† We read of no embassy that the people of Keilah sent to David to desire his assistance, nor of any particular affection they had for him; and therefore we may suppose, that David undertook this expedition out of pure love to his countrymen, to let the world see how serviceable he could be to them, in case he was restored to his dignity again, and that (what ill treatment soever he should meet with from the hand of Saul) nothing should provoke him to abandon his love for his country; *Le Clerk's Commentary.*

† In Joshua xv. 55. we read of a town of this name, where

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P p

mention

A. M.
2388, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

reach him ; that he still hoped to see him king of Israel, and himself his second ; and with these words, confirming the covenant of friendship between them, they embraced and parted.

The people of the wilderness were very officious in sending Saul intelligence where David was, and (if he would supply them with a sufficient force) undertook to betray him into his hands : But David having taken notice of their intended treachery, retired farther into the desert of Maon, whither Saul pursued him, and pressed him so close, that there was but a valley between the two armies. David's army was so very small, that Saul was thinking of encompassing the mountain where he incamped, in order to prevent his escape, when news was brought him, that the Philistines had invaded the country on the other side, so that he was forced to drop his private resentment for the public weal, and divert his arms another way : But as soon as the Philistines were repulsed, he, with three thousand choice men, renewed his pursuit of David, who, by this time was retired into the strong holds of † En-gedi.

As Saul was on his march, he happened to turn into a cave to ease nature, where David and some of his men lay hid. His men, when they saw the king entering alone,

mention is likewise made of Carmel, and Maon, and therefore it probably was adjacent to them. And here, in the story of David, we find Carmel and Maon mentioned as adjoining to Ziph ; so that it is not to be doubted, but that by the Ziph in the wilderness, where David now concealed himself, we are to understand the Ziph which was in the neighbourhood of Carmel and Maon, in the southern part of the tribe of Judah, and, according to St. Jerom, about eight miles eastward from Hebron ; *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3.

† En-gedi (now called *Anguedi*) in the days of St. Jerom, was a large village, situate in the deserts, which lay upon the western coasts of the Salt or Dead sea, not very far from the plains of Jericho : And as the country thereabouts abounded with mountains, and these mountains had plenty of vast caves in them, it was a very commodious place for David to retire to, and conceal himself in. Eusebius makes it famous for excellent balm, and Solomon, in his Song, for vineyards, which, in all probability, were planted by his father during his retirement in this place ; and therefore so peculiarly celebrated by the son ; *Calmet's Commentary* ; *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. 3. ; and *The History of King David*, by the author of *Revelation examined*.

thought

thought it a lucky opportunity that providence had put in their hands, and accordingly instigated David to dispatch him. But David rejected the offer with abhorrence: * *God forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed*; and only (to shew Saul how much he was in his power) went softly, and † cut off the skirt of his robe. When Saul was gone out of the cave, David called to him at a distance, and shewing him the skirt of his raiment, declared his innocence in such tender terms, and with such submissive behaviour, that he made the king's heart relent. So that, with the utmost compunction, he acknowledged his guilt in thus persecuting the just; and from the many escapes which God had vouchsafed David, concluding assuredly that he was to succeed in the kingdom, he conjured him, by all that was sacred, || not to destroy his family;

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

* This one example of David's, under all the provocations he received from Saul, abundantly shews us, that the persons of kings are sacred and inviolable.

Regum timendorum in proprios greges,

Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovis.

Hor. Od.

† If it be asked, how David could do this without Saul's perceiving it? The answer may be, that this possibly might be some upper loose garments, which Saul might put off, and lay aside at some distance from him, upon this occasion; and that as there were several rooms, or particular cells, in these large caverns, which might have secret passages from one to another, Saul, at the mouth of one of these cells, might lay down this upper garment, which David perceiving, and knowing all the passages of the place, might go some secret way, and cut off some small part of it. Nor could the noise which David's motion might make be well heard by Saul, because it must have been drowned by a much greater noise which Saul's army, waiting for him at the mouth of the cave, may be supposed to make; *Pool's Annotations*.

|| But how did David absolve his promise, or keep his oath with Saul, when in 2 Sam. xxiii. 8. he slew so many of his sons? The reply that is usually made to this is, — That this promise or oath of David's could never be absolute or unconditional, because, upon supposition that any of Saul's family had become rebellious, they had nevertheless been obnoxious to the sword of justice; that tho' David could bind himself with his oath, yet he could not bind God, to whose will and pleasure all private obligations must be submitted; and what is more, that this execution was not done by David's order, but at the desire of the Gibeonites, to whom God had promised that satisfaction should be made for Saul's bloody endeavours to destroy them; *Patick's Commentary*; and *Pool's Annotations*.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

and having obtained this promise, he returned home: But David, * not daring to trust to his fair words, still kept himself close in the fastnesses of the hills.

Much about this time † the prophet Samuel died, and was buried at Ramah, the place of his habitation, in great solemnity,

* It is an old saying, and a wise one, *μὴ μνησθὲ ἀπὸ ἐχθροῦ, Remember not to be too credulous*; and the advice of the son of Sirach is this, ——— *Never trust thine enemy; though he humble himself, yet take good heed, and beware of him*; Ecclus. xii. 10, 11.

† The Jews are of opinion, that Samuel died only four months before Saul: But by the generality of Christian chronologers, he is supposed to have died about two years before the death of that prince, and in the ninety-eighth year of his age, twenty of which had been spent in the government of Israel, (though Sir John Marsham will have it no more than sixteen), before Saul's inauguration, after which he lived about eighteen. He was at first interred at Ramah; but in the time of the Emperor Arcadius, his body was transported from Palestine to Constantinople, and (as St. Jerom informs us) received both by the clergy and laity with a joy unspeakable, and honours almost infinite. He was indeed, while he lived, an excellent governour, and through his whole administration above vanity, corruption, or any private views. Those that attend to his life may observe, that he was modest without meanness, mild without weakness, firm without obstinacy, and severe without harshness; or as the author of Ecclesiasticus has recorded his actions, and consecrated this eulogy to his memory:—*Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, (says he) beloved of the Lord, established a kingdom, and anointed princes over his people. By the law of the Lord he judged the congregation, and the Lord had respect unto Jacob. By his faithfulness he was found a true prophet, and by his word he was known to be faithful in vision. He called upon the mighty God when his enemies pressed upon him on every side, when he offered the sucking-lamb; and the Lord thundered from heaven, and with a great noise made his voice to be heard. He destroyed the rulers of the Syrians, and all the princes of the Philistines. Before his long sleep, he made protestations in the sight of the Lord, and his anointed, and after his death he prophesied and shewed the king his end*; Ecclus. xvi. 13. &c. But besides the things that are recorded of this prophet in the first book of Samuel, there are some other passages concerning him in the first book of Chronicles; as, That he enriched the tabernacle with several spoils which he took from the enemies of Israel during his administration, chap. xxvi. 28. That he assisted in regulating the distribution of the Levites, which David

solemnity, and † with the general lamentation of the people: During which time, David took the opportunity to remove from En-gedi, and to retire farther into the wilderness of Paran, not far from Maon, where he had been once before.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

In the neighbourhood of this place, there lived a wealthy man, whose name was Nabal, but himself was of a surly and morose disposition. While David abode in this wilderness the time before, he had taken great care to restrain his men from doing any injury to Nabal's flocks, and now in the time of his sheep-shearing, (which in these countries was always a season of great festivity and entertainment), he sent messengers to him, that in consideration of the many civilities he had shewn him, he would be pleased to send some provisions for the support of his army. But Nabal received the messengers very rudely, and with some opprobrious reflections upon David himself, sent them away empty; which so exasperated David, that in the heat of his resentment, he vowed to destroy all Nabal's family before next morning, and with this resolution he set forward: But Abigail, Nabal's wife, who was a very beautiful woman, and in temper the very reverse of her husband, being informed by her servant of what had passed, took this expedient to divert his ire.

David's interview with Abigail, Nabal's wife, whom he afterwards marries.

She ordered her servants immediately to pack up two hundred loaves of bread, || two bottles of wine, five sheep

David afterwards prescribed for the service of the temple, chap. ix. 22. And, lastly, That he wrote the history of David, in conjunction with the prophets Nathan and Gad: But as he was dead before David came to the throne, this can be meant only of the beginning of that history, which by the other two prophets might be continued and concluded. There is great probability indeed, that he composed the twenty-four first chapters of the first book of Samuel, which contain the beginning of David's life, and several historical facts wherein he himself had a large share; but as for the latter part of it, it was impossible for him to write it, because, in the beginning of the 25th chapter, there is mention made of his death.

† When they saw the disorders of Saul's reign, they had great reason to lament their loss of Samuel, and their sin in rejecting so great a prophet, and so good a magistrate; *Millar's History of the church.*

|| It must be obvious to every reader, that two bottles of wine would bear no proportion to the other parts of the present, nor answer the exigencies which David's army might be in,

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

sheep ready dressed, five measures of parched corn, an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs; and with this present she made haste to meet David. David was marching with all speed, to put in execution his rash vow; but Abigail, when she met him, approached him with that respect, and addressed him † in such moving language, that she soon disarmed him of his rage, and stopped the effects of his indignation; so that they both parted with mutual satisfaction; he, for being thus prevented from shedding of blood, and she, for having thus happily succeeded in her embassy.

When she got home, she found her husband rioting and drinking; so that she deferred telling him of what had passed until he was a little soberer the next morning. But when he came to understand the danger he had been in, he was so terrified at the thoughts of it, that ‖ he turned quite

in, if they be understood of such bottles as are now commonly in use with us: but in these eastern countries, they used to carry and keep their wine and water in leathern bags, made on purpose to hold liquid things, which vessels they called, or (at least) we translate, *bottles*. Such were the bottles which the Gibeonites brought to Joshua's camp, which they said were worn out, and torn in their pretended long journey, Josh. xi. 13. And of such as those it is not unlikely that our Saviour speaks, Matth. ix. 17. where, in the marginal note of our old Bible, bottles are explained by bags of leather, or skins, borachios, wherein wine was carried on asses or camels: and that two such vessels as these might hold a quantity of wine proportionate to the rest of the present which Abigail carried with her, needs not to be disputed; *Arnold's History*, in the notes.

† The speech which the sacred historians puts in Abigail's mouth upon this occasion, is certainly an artful piece of eloquence, full of fine turns and insinuations; nor is that of Josephus, especially in the conclusion, much amiss; — — “ Be pleased, Sir, I beseech you, “ to accept of the good will of your poor servant in these small presents, and upon my humble request, to pass over the offence of “ my husband, who has so justly incurred your displeasure; for there “ is nothing so well becoming the character of a person, whom “ providence designs for a crown, as clemency and compassion:” *Jewish Antiq. lib. 6. c. 14.*

‖ The words in the original are, *He became a stone*; but our translation has wisely supplied the particle *as*, which should always be done, when the Scripture affirms something of another that is not absolutely of the same nature. We may observe, however, that

this

quite stupid, and in the space of ten days died: whereupon David sent for his wife, and married her, as he did like-
 wife another woman, whose name was *Abinoam* a Jezrael-
 ite; for his first wife, who was Saul's daughter, by her fa-
 ther's command, † was at this time given to another.

A. M.
 2888, &c.
 Ant. Christ.
 1116, &c.
 from 1 Sam.
 i. to the end.

The Ziphites (as we said before) were always forward to give Saul information where David and his men were concealed; and therefore, understanding from them, that he was somewhere about the mountain Hachilah †, he took three thousand men, and went in quest of him. David had intelligence where Saul's army lay encamped; and therefore going first of all privately himself, to reconnoitre

His saving
 King Saul,
 when he
 was in his
 power.

this manner of expression is common among profane authors. Thus Ovid brings in Ariadne expressing her grief and astonishment at the loss of Theseus, who had left her in the island Dia:

Aut mare proficiens in faxo frigida fedi,
 Quamque lapis fedes, tam lapis ipsa fui.

The like expression is used of Hecuba, when she saw the dead body of her son Polydorus:

———duroque simillima faxo
 Torpet. ——— ———

But in the case of Niobe, who is said to be turned into a statue of stone, Cicero, in his Tusculan questions, observes that this fable only represents her perpetual silence, in mourning: And accordingly Josephus tells us of Nabal, that when his wife told him of the danger he had escaped, he was struck with such an astonishment, that he fell into a dead numbness all over his body, of which he soon died; *Le Clerc's Commentary*; and *Dissert. De statua salis*.

† The reason of Saul's putting this indignity upon David, was to extinguish, as far as he could, all relation and kindred, and to cut off his hopes and pretences to the crown upon that account: but as the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that this Phalti, to whom she was given, was a very pious man, and would never approach her, because she was another man's wife, and as David had never been divorced from her, he received her again, when he came to the throne; *Pool's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† The inconstancy, falseness, and implacable rage of this prince is really inconceivable. Not long ago he was obliged to David for his life, acknowledged his error, and made David swear that he would be kind and merciful to his posterity; and yet now he openly declares himself again his enemy, and goes in pursuit of him to kill him; *Patrick's Commentary*.

it,

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
3. to the end.

it, he † took with him at night his nephew Abishai, and entering the camp, found Saul and Abner, and all the rest of the host fast asleep. Abishai would have gladly made use of this opportunity to dispatch the king, but David would by no means permit him, for the same reasons that he had saved his life in the cave; only the * spear and cruse of water, that were at his bed's head, he bid him bring with him, that he might shew the king how much his life had been at his mercy: and accordingly when they had got at a convenient distance, David, with a loud voice, called unto Abner, and, in an † ironical

† This may seem a bold and strange attempt, for two persons to go into the midst of an army of three thousand chosen men; but in answer to this, many things may be considered: as that, according to the accounts of many credible historians, several gallant men have attempted things of no less danger and difficulty than this was; that David had all along assurance given him, that God would preserve him in all dangers to succeed in the kingdom; and that at this time he might have a particular impulse and incitement from God to go upon this enterprise, and might possibly be informed by him, that he had cast them into a deep sleep, that he might give him this second opportunity of manifesting to Saul his innocence, and the justness of his cause. Not to say, that as secrecy, at this time, was the great point, David might think himself safer, in this respect, with one single companion, than with more; *Pool's Annotations*; and *The life of King David*.

* That it was customary for warriors, when they laid them down to rest, to have their arms placed in order by them, is evident from what Silius Italicus tells us of Mago, Hannibal's brother.

Nec degener ille
Belligeri ritus, taurino membra jacebat
Effultus tergo, et mulcebat tristitia somno.
Haud procul hasta viri terra defixa propinqua,
Et dira e summa pendebat cuspide cassis,
Et clypeus circa, loricaque, et ensis, et arcus,
Et telum Baleare: simul tellure quiescunt, &c. Lib. vii.

But long before Silius, Homer describes the Thracians, sleeping in this manner in their tents:

Οἱ δ' ἔνδον καμάτῳ ἀδδηκότες ἔντια δ' ἔσφιν
Καλὰ παρ' αὐτοῖσι χθονὶ κέλαιτο εὐ κατὰ κόσμον.
Ῥῆσος δ' ἐν μέσῳ ἔνδι

Il. 10.

† The speech which David makes to Abner, according to Josephus, is to this effect: — “Are not you a fit man to be
“ a prince's favourite, a general of his army, to take upon you
“ the guard of his royal person, and under all these honour-
able

nical manner, upbraided him with his neglect of preserving the king's life, since his spear, and the cruse of water that were so near his bed's head, were so easily taken from him: And when Saul, upon hearing his voice, came out of the camp, and spake to him, he expostulated with him, much in the same manner as he did after his escape from the cave, with this additional complaint, that by thus expelling him from his own country, he forced him to converse with infidels, and (as much as in him lay) to embrace their religion. Whereupon Saul, accusing himself of cruelty, and applauding David's generosity, confessed his guilt, and promised for the future, never to make any farther attempts upon his life.

A. M.
2838, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

But notwithstanding these specious declarations, David, who knew the instability of Saul's temper, and how impossible it was for him to live in safety while he continued in his dominions, determined at last to go over to the Philistines; and having obtained from † Achish, king

His retreat-
ing to A-
chish, and
living at
Ziklag.

“able obligations, to lie dozing, and stretching yourself at ease, “when your master's life is in danger? Can you tell me what “is become of the king's lance, and the pitcher of water, that “were this night taken by the enemy out of his tent, and from “his very bed-side, and you, in the mean time, all snoring about “him, without knowing anything of the matter? Whether this “was neglect or treachery, it is the same thing; you certainly “deserve to lose your head for it; *Jewish Antiq. lib. vi. c. 14.*

† Whether this was the same Achish, mentioned 1 Sam. xxi 10. with whom David took shelter at his first flight from Saul, or some successor of the same name, is a matter of some conjecture: His being called *Achish the son of Maach*, seems to imply that he was a different person; because, in the nature of things, these words can have no use, but only to distinguish this Achish from another of the same name. But whoever it was, it is highly probable, that he either had invited David to come thither for his security, or that David had sent before hand ambassadors to treat with him, and to obtain his royal promise of protection. And this we are the rather induced to believe, because both found their advantage by this alliance: David secured himself against the persecutions of Saul; and Achish knowing David's valour, and the number of troops which came along with him, thought he should give a powerful diversion to the forces of Israel, if he could at this time attach David to his interest. But whether David did well or ill in either suing for or accepting of the protection of this foreign king, is a point that we shall have occasion to discuss hereafter; *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries*; and *The life of King David*.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Chris.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

of Gath, a safe conduct for himself and his retinue, he for some time, lived in the royal city ; but not liking his accommodation here so well, as he grew in favour with the king, ever more and more, he obtained of him at last to have the † town of Ziklag assigned for his habitation ; and, as soon as he was settled here, several of Saul's best officers and soldiers came over to him. David at first had some suspicion of them ; but having, for some time, made trial of their fidelity, he received them into his service, and gave them commands : And with this accession to his army, he was enabled to make several excursions against the ‖ Amalekites, and other nations, in which he was accustomed to kill all, that none might carry information ; and, at the same time, † by certain ambiguous

† Ziklag was situate in the extreme parts of the tribe of Judah southwards, not far from Hormah, where the Israelites received a defeat while they sojourned in the wilderness. In the division of the land of Canaan, it was first given to the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 31, and afterwards to that of Simeon, Josh. xix. 5. ; but the Philistines seem all along to have kept possession ; so that it never came into the hands of either tribe, until, by the gift of Achish, it became the peculiar inheritance of David and his successors. Why David desired of Achish the liberty to retire to this place, was to avoid the envy which the number of his attendants might possibly occasion ; to secure his people from the infection of idolatry ; to enjoy the free exercise of his own religion ; and to gain an opportunity of enterprising something against the enemies of God, without the knowledge or observation of the Philistines ; *Calmét's Commentary* ; and *Pool's Annot.*

‖ In 1 Sam. xv. 7. we read, that *Saul smote the Amalekites, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword* ; and yet we find here David making frequent incursions upon the Amalekites ; and therefore the meaning of the former passage must be, that Saul destroyed as many of them as fell into his hands ; for several of them might make their escape from Saul into the deserts that lay towards Arabia Felix, and upon his retreat, return and repossess their old habitation ; *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

† The words wherein David answered this question of Achish, *Whither have you made a road to day ? are these, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites*, 1 Sam. xxvii. 10. By which nations David, in reality, meant the Geshurites and the Getherites, who were both of them relicts of the Canaanites, whom God ordered to be extirpated, and who did, in truth,

ambiguous expressions, made the king believe, that the booty he brought back with him was taken from the Israelites, which was no unpleasant news.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

In short, to such a degree of confidence was he grown with Achish, that he proposed taking him along with him to the war, which the Philistines had at this time declared against Saul; but some of the chief men about him declaring against it, as being apprehensive, that in the day of battle he might possibly turn against them, prevailed with the king to dismiss him. This was an agreeable turn to David; yet he so far dissembled the matter, that the king (to oblige his nobles) was forced to be very pressing and importunate with him to return to Ziklag; which accordingly he did, and, in his march thither, was joined by several of the tribe of Manasseh (as those of Gad and Benjamin had done before) to a considerable augmentation of his forces. And well it so happened: For upon his return to Ziklag, he found that the Amalekites had burnt and pillaged the place, † and carried away his two wives, and all the people that were therein; and (what was no small accession to this misfortune) his soldiers mutinied against him, as if he had been the † occasion of it. David, however,

live to the south of Judah; but Achish understood him in a quite contrary sense, viz. that he had fallen upon his own countrymen. So that since the formality of a lie consists in our imposing upon those with whom we converse, we cannot but allow, that though David's answer may not be called a downright lie, yet it is an equivocation with an intent to deceive, badly comporting with that honesty and simplicity which became David, both as a prince and professor of the true religion, wherein he is noway to be excused, and much less to be imitated; *Pool's Annotations*.

† It may seem a little strange, that the Amalekites, who had so often been cut to pieces by David, should not, upon their success, slay, rather than carry away the people, which they found in Ziklag: But this may be imputed either to their covetousness, who might keep them for sale, and to make money of them as captives; or to their cruelty, who might reserve them for more lingering and repeated torments, or perhaps for the gratification of their brutal lusts; though principally it is to be ascribed to God's overruling providence, who restrained and set bounds to their rage; *Pool's Annotations*.

† This he might seem to be in relinquishing his own country, and coming to Ziklag; in provoking the Amalekites by the

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Chris.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

ver, marching away immediately, and having gained intelligence which way the enemy took, soon came up with them, fell upon them, and cut them to pieces, and not only recovered all the persons and the booty, which they had taken, but several rich spoils likewise, that they had robbed others of in this expedition, whereof he made presents to his friends †.

Saul's consulting the
witch of
Endor.

In the mean time, the Philistine army lay † at Shunem, and Saul and his forces were encamped in Mount Gilboa, from whence having a prospect of the enemy's strength, † his courage failed him, when he saw how much more numerous the Philistines were, and found, at the same time, that God, in this pressing juncture, would not be consulted by him, nor give him any instructions what to do. He had, some time before, banished all the wizards, and such as dealt with familiar spirits, out of the nation; but being now in the utmost perplexity, † he
was

slaughter of all that came in his way; and in going with Achish to war, while he left the place, where their wives and children were, unguarded; *Pool's Annotations.*

† His friends were chiefly those of his own tribe; but besides these, we find he sent to others, viz. to the inhabitants of the city of Bethel, which belonged to the tribe of Ephraim; and this he did, not only in acknowledgment of the shelter and support which he had received from them in his banishment, but in prospect of their future favour and interest, in case there should happen a vacancy in the throne: *Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries.*

† Shunem was a city on the borders of the tribe of Issachar, about five miles to the south of Mount Hermon, according to St. Jerome and Eusebius, who tell us likewise, that Gilboa was a ridge of mountains, six miles distance from Scythopolis, anciently called *Bethshan*; and that Endor was a town in the valley of Jezreel, at the foot of Mount Gilboa; *Well's Geography of the Old Testament*; and *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

† The Philistines must have had, on this occasion, several hired forces, otherwise Saul had no reason to have been afraid of them, because the small tract which the Philistines inhabited could not possibly supply them with an army any thing equal to the Hebrews, who, in some of their wars, have carried to the field some hundred thousands of men: *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

† A strange infatuation this of Saul! He had banished all wizards and sorcerers out of his kingdom, as a dangerous sort of people, who made profession of a wicked and unwarrantable

was resolved to consult some one of this profession, in order to know what the fate of this war would be. A. M. 2388, etc. Ant. Christ. 1116, etc. from 1 Sam. 1. to the end. At Endor, about three leagues from Mount Gilboa, he was told there lived a * witch or sorceress; and therefore disguising himself, and taking but two servants with him, that he might not be suspected, he came to the woman * by night, and desired of her * to raise up the ghost of Samuel.

able art; and yet he here inquires after one, and puts his whole confidence in what he had so wisely exploded before; as if a witch with her incantations, and other diabolical arts, was capable of allaying the uneasiness of his mind, or securing him from the apprehensions of danger. It may be observed, however, that he mentions a woman rather than a man to be consulted upon this occasion, because he might imagine that the weaker sex might more easily be deceived by evil spirits, and were generally more addicted to these unlawful practices; *Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries.*

* The Septuagint have called her, *a woman that speaks from her belly, or stomach*, as most magicians affected to do: and some modern authors have informed us, that there were women who had a demon, which spake articulately from the lower part of their stomachs, in a very loud, though hoarse tone:

Umbræ cum sagana resonarunt, triste et acutum. Hor. sat. 8.

* They could not go the direct way; for then they must have passed through the enemy's camp; and therefore they took a compass, and travelled by night, that they might not be discovered; besides that the night was the properest time to consult those that pretended to magical incantations, it being a common opinion among the Greeks, as perhaps now it might be among the Hebrews, that none of the terrestrial demons did appear in the day-time; *Pat. Comm.*

* It was a common pretence of magicians, that they could raise up ghosts from below, or make dead persons appear to declare unto them future events.

— Cruor in fossam confusus, ut inde

Manes elicerent, animas responsa daturus. Hor. sat. lib. 1.

And therefore Saul addresses the woman, as if he believed her abilities in that way. This however shews, not only the antiquity of necromancy, but the prevailing opinion then, that the soul, after the death of the body, did survive; otherwise it would have been impertinent for Saul to desire the woman to raise up Samuel: Which makes it the greater wonder, that we have nowhere, in the Old Testament, a positive declaration of the soul's immortality; *Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Chrift.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

Whether it was the ghost of Samuel, which God, upon this occasion, permitted to appear, or some evil spirit whom the witch, by her enchantments, might raise up; but so it was, that from this spectre † the woman learnt that it was Saul who had employed her; and Saul, when he saw it, bowed his face to the ground. The apparition spake first, and demanding the reason * why he had raised him from the dead, was answered by Saul, that the Philistines, with a powerful army, had invaded him, and in his distress, God had forsaken him, and would give no answer † which way soever he consulted him: To whom the spirit replied, that for his disobedience in not destroying the Amalekites, God had taken away the kingdom from his family, and given it to David; and as to the fate

† How the woman came to know it to be Samuel, we may thus imagine. She saw an apparition she did not expect; she knew the prophet; she knew the veneration which Saul had for him; she knew that prophets were only sent to kings; and she knew withal, that her art, whatever it was, had never before that time exhibited a person of that figure to her; and from hence she concluded, that the apparition must needs be Samuel, and the person who came to consult her, in all probability, was Saul; *The History of the life of King David.*

* The words of Samuel are, *Why hast thou disquieted me, and brought me up?* Which seem to imply, that Samuel was raised up by the force of this woman's enchantments: But as it is not in the power of witches to disturb the rest of good men, and bring them into the world when they please, it is much more rational to think, that the Scripture here expresses itself in a manner suitable to the prejudice of the vulgar, among whom it was a common notion, that these incantations gave trouble to the souls that were at rest: For which reason, they were either to be appeased by offerings, or constrained by the force of enchantments; for so the tragedian has informed us;

Carmenque magicum volvit, et rapido minax

Decantat ore, quicquid aut placat leves

Aut cogit umbras.

Seneca in Oedip.

† The sacred historian has reckoned up three several ways of inquiring of God, viz. by dreams, by Urim, and by prophets; and it may not be amiss to observe, that there were the same methods of consulting their gods among the Gentiles; as it appears by what Achilles says in the council of the Greeks, when met together to consult about the plague which Apollo sent among them:

Ἄλλ' ἄγε δὴ τινα μάντιν ἐρετόμεν, ἢ ἱερεῖα,

* Ἡ καὶ οὐνεροπόλον, καὶ γὰρ τ' ὄναρ ἐκ Διὸς ἐστίν.

of the war, the Philistines, † the next day, should rout his army, and he and his sons fall in the battle.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

Saul had no sooner heard his doom, but he fainted away; and as he had eaten nothing for some considerable time, * the woman and his servants, with much ado, prevailed with him to take some refreshment: Which when he had done, he went away, and marched all night, that he might come early enough to the camp next morning.

The next morning the two armies met, and engaged; but the Israelites were obliged to give way, and maintained a running fight, until they came to Mount Gilboa; where gaining the advantage of the ground, they attempted to rally again, but with as little success as before. Saul and his sons did all that was possible for brave men to do; but the Philistines aiming wholly at them, in a short time,

Is vanquished by the Philistines and slain.

† The phrase wherein Samuel expresses himself, is this,—*To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me*: Where the word *to-morrow*, as some interpreters imagine, is not to be taken in a strict sense, because, as they conceive, this battle was not fought till some time after; but in the passage before us, there seems to be no reason why to-morrow should not be taken literally: For as Endor was at no great distance from the Israelites camp, Saul might go that night, consult the witch, stay, and eat with her, and get back to the camp before it was light. The next day the battle begins; Saul is vanquished; and seeing his army routed, despairs, and stabs himself. All this might very well be done in the space of twelve or fourteen hours; and therefore I see no occasion why we should depart from the plain signification of the words; *Calmet's Commentary*.

* Josephus seems to be very warm in his commendation of this woman's generosity to Saul. "She received him, treated him, and relieved him; and all this so cheerfully, and so frankly, that she gave him all she had, without any prospect of reward; for she knew that he was doomed to die: And what is more, this she did for the very man whose prohibition had been her ruin." But he rashly supposes, that in the words of the sacred history, the narration is accurate, and defective in no one circumstance; whereas, for any thing we know, this woman was far from being poor; Saul had amply rewarded her for raising up Samuel, and his attendants might give her a round price for her lamb. And though it must be owned, that her address to the king is tender and respectful enough, yet whether it proceeded from fear or affection, may admit of some debate; *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

overpowered

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

overpowered them with numbers, † so that Jonathan, and two others of his brothers, Abinadab and Malchishua, were killed upon the spot, and the whole army put in confusion.

Saul defended himself as well as man could do ; but the small party that remained with him being entirely broken, and the † enemy's archers pressing hard upon him, he found himself so weakened with his wounds and loss of blood, that for fear of falling into their hands and being insulted, he fell upon his own sword, and so died. He had requested of his armour-bearer before this to dispatch him ; but his armour-bearer was startled at the proposal, and refused to do it : However, when he saw his master dead, † he desperately followed his example, and in the same manner, put an end to his life.

The

† It was certainly no small grief to David to hear of Jonathan's death, and a trial it might be of his patience and resignation to the divine will ; but still there seems to be a direction of providence in suffering him to be slain, that David might more easily come to the throne. For though Jonathan, no doubt, would have made a voluntary dedition of it, yet as he was the people's great favourite, some there might possibly be, who would not allow of the dedition, and so a civil war might have arose concerning the successor, which, by his dying in this manner, was prevented ; *Pool's Annotations.*

† There is no mention of archers in any of the Philistines armies, or battles, before this, in which they are said to have pressed hard upon Saul, as doubtless they were of great advantage to the Philistines in making their attack ; 1st, Because an assault with this kind of weapon was new and surprizing, and therefore generally successful ; and 2dly, Because the arrows destroying the Israelites at a distance, before they came to close fight, threw them naturally into terror and confusion. And for this reason some think, that when David came to the throne, he taught the Israelites the use of the bow, (as we read 2 Sam. i. 18.) that they might not be inferior to the Philistines, nor fall into the like disaster that Saul had done ; and for this reason it certainly was, that when he had made a peace with the Philistines, he took some of their archers (who in the following books are frequently mentioned under the name of *Gerethites*) to be his body-guard ; *Patrick's Commentary* ; and *The History of the life of King David.*

† The learned and ingenious author of *The historical account of the life of King David*, seems to make it evident, that Saul and his armour-bearer died by the same sword, viz. that which belonged to the armour-bearer. " Now it is an established

The next day, when the Philistines came to take a view of the field of battle, finding the bodies of Saul and his sons among the slain, they stripped them of their armour, cut off their heads, and sent expresses to every place of their victory. * Their armour they sent to the temple of Ashtarothe, their heads they fixed up in the temple of Dagon, and their bodies they hung upon gibbets against the walls of Bethshan. But the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, hearing of this indignity, and retaining a grateful sense of the services Saul had done them, sent a party of their best soldiers by night, who took down their bodies, and brought them away to Jabesh, where the people first † burnt the remains of their flesh; next honourably interr'd their

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

“ blished tradition of the Jewish church, (says he) that this ar-
“ mour-bearer was Doeg the Edomite, who, by Saul’s command,
“ slew such a number of priests in one day, 1 Sam. xxii. 18.;
“ and if so, then Saul and his executioner fell both by the same
“ weapon wherewith they before had massacred the servants of
“ the Lord: Even as Brutus and Cassius killed themselves with
“ the same swords with which they treacherously murdered
“ Cæsar; I say treacherously murdered, because they lay in his
“ bosom at the same time that they meditated his death;” vol. 1.

* We have taken notice before, that it was an ancient custom among sundry nations to hang up the arms, and other spoils taken from the enemy, in the temples of their gods, as trophies and monuments of their victory; and need only remark here, that the same custom prevailed among the Greeks and Romans, as appears from this passage of Virgil:

Multaque præterea sacris in postibus arma,
Captivi pendent currus, curvæque secures,
Et cristæ capitum, et portarum ingentia claustra,
Spiculaque, clypeique, eractaque rostra carinis. *Æneid.* 7.

† It is certain that the usage among the Hebrews was not to burn, but embalm the bodies of their dead with aromatic spices; but in this case the people of Jabesh might act otherwise, either because the bodies of Saul and his sons were, by this time, so dried or corrupted, that they were not fit to be embalmed; or because they were apprehensive, that, if they should embalm them, and so bury them, the people of Bethshan might, at one time or other, come and dig them up, and fix them against their walls again; and therefore the Jabeshites thought it advisable to recede from their common practice, and, for the greater security, to imitate the Heathens in this particular.

Κλαίοντες δ' ἐτάραξο ἑνὸς ὄσσε λευκά.

· Ἀλλ' ἔργον ἐς χερσέων Φιδίην.

Hom. II. xxiii.

Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
1, to the end.

bones and ashes, in a grove that was near their city; and then, for the space of † seven days, fasted, and made great lamentation for them.

The OBJECTION.

“ **T**HOUGH the first book of Samuel (whoever its author was) contains a great variety of history, and is pregnant with many remarkable transactions; yet whoever takes an accurate survey of them, will find them so loaded with absurdities and contradictions, as utterly destroy their credibility. For whatever motives the Israelites might have for carrying the ark along with them to the war, if the real presence of God went along with it, we can hardly conceive how the Philistines could possibly take it captive; and if there was no divine power attending it, how it came to work those wonders wherever it abode, and to inflict upon its enemies such sore punishments for their detention of it.

“ Its enemies indeed, upon this supposition, had cause enough to endeavour to get rid of it; but it is a matter of some admiration, why the Israelites, when they had it returned to them, did not carry it directly to Shiloh, and there reposit it in the tabernacle, its proper habitation. It looks indeed, as if they were afraid of it, and willing to shift it from one to another, after it had made such havock among the poor people of Bethshemesh, as to destroy above fifty thousand of them, an incredible number! merely for presuming to peep into it, though

† It seems a little strange, that we no where read of any general mourning that was made for Saul and his sons, who died in battle; but the national troubles which followed upon his death might perhaps be an obstruction to this. David and his men mourned but one day for Saul: And therefore, when it is said of the Jabeshites, that they fasted seven days, their fasting must not be understood in a strict sense, as if they eat nothing all this time, but in a more large and general signification, as it is used both in sacred and profane writers, *viz.* that they lived very abstemiously, eat little, and that seldom, and that but mean food, and, instead of wine, drank water only; *Calmet's Commentary, and Pool's Annotations.*

“ they

“ they had received it with the greatest respect and congratu-
 “ tulations but just before.

A. M.
 2888, etc.
 Ant. Chris.
 1176, etc.
 from 1 Sam.
 i. to the end.

“ The Israelites, it must be owned, were, upon several
 “ accounts, a very rebellious people ; but it is difficult to
 “ conceive where their great iniquity lay, in desiring a
 “ king as other nations had ; especially since Samuel’s sons
 “ ruled so badly, and God, in his great wisdom, had pre-
 “ ordained that, when they came into the promised land,
 “ their government should be regal. This king, we un-
 “ derstand, was to be elected by God ; but it looks a little
 “ envious, and as if he had given them a king in his
 “ wrath, to make choice of one out of the meanest of all
 “ the tribes, and for no other good qualification that we
 “ read of, but merely the tallness of his stature. The state
 “ and dignity, however, to which he was advanced, was
 “ not so great, since, after his election, we find him (a)
 “ acting in the capacity of a shepherd ; nor was his en-
 “ joyment of the throne attended with much felicity, since
 “ God turned his enemy so soon, and rejected him for not
 “ destroying the whole race of the Amalekites.

“ (b) God’s command indeed, to have every thing be-
 “ longing to Amalek, men and women, infants and suck-
 “ lings, oxen and sheep, camels and asses, utterly destroy-
 “ ed, for an offence done four hundred years before, and
 “ to prosecute revenge upon a people, whose only crime
 “ was, their being the unhappy descendents of those who
 “ had originally done it, seems to bear as hard upon the
 “ justice and goodness of God, as his sending Samuel to
 “ Bethlehem to anoint David king, and bidding him at the
 “ same time, pretend that he came only to offer a sacrifice,
 “ reflects upon his truth and veracity.

“ It may very well be questioned, however, by what au-
 “ thority Samuel could offer any sacrifice, since he was not
 “ of the sacerdotal order, on such altars as were prohi-
 “ bited, and in such places as were not appointed for these
 “ offices, to the manifest violation of God’s laws : And
 “ much more may it be wondered at, that a man of his
 “ pacific character should fall upon a poor captive king,
 “ and cut him in pieces with his own hands, even in the
 “ presence of his own sovereign, who, out of his clemen-

(a) 1 Sam. xi. 5.

(b) Christianity as old as the creation, p.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

“cy, had thought proper to save him; and so setting him-
“self above the jurisdiction of God’s anointed, and flying
“in the face of his authority.

“What Saul’s particular distemper was, it is no easy
“matter to determine; but, since the Scripture expresses it
“by (c) *an evil spirit from the Lord*, it is difficult to con-
“ceive how David, by playing upon his harp, (even (d)
“though he might sing to it likewise) could ever be able
“to dispossess him. The power of music is confessedly
“great; and yet we find it had little or no effect upon
“Saul, since he still continued crazed and delirious.
“For to what other cause can we impute his (e) strange
“forgetfulness of David, who had been so frequently in
“his presence, and (f) found such favour in his sight;
“ (g) whose attendance he had requested of his father, and
“ whose service, in curing his malady, he had requited
“ with the honourable post of his armour-bearer; with
“ whom (h) he had a conference but just before, and seen
“ him both put on and off his armour; and after all this,
“ could any but a mad man inquire of his general (who
“ knew it seems as little as his master) (i) *whose son this*
“ *stripling was?*

“Whether David himself was really delirious, or only
“pretended to be so, when he came to the court of A-
“chish, is a question that admits of some debate; but it
“seems as if he were not much better, when he made not
“only Gath, which was the capital of the Philistines, and
“the city where Goliath had dwelt, the place of his refuge,
“but (as if he meant on purpose to provoke the inhabi-
“tants thereof) took the sword of the champion along
“with him, whom he had so lately slain. Well was it for
“him, if, to secure him from harm, God deprived him
“of his senses at this juncture. For to extricate himself
“from a *præmunire* he had voluntarily run into, by per-
“sonating the madman, or pretending to be a fool, was
“but a mean trick; as his opening an asylum afterwards,
“not for his own relations only, but for every one that
“was in debt, or distress, or discontent with the go-
“vernment, was certainly an unjust artifice.

(c) 1 Sam. xvi. 14. (d) Josephus’s Jewish Antiq. l. vi. c. 9.
(e) 1 Sam. xvii. 55. (f) Ibid. xvi. 22. (g) Ibid. xvi. 22.
(h) Ibid. xvii. 38, 39. (i) Ibid. ver. 56.

“ Saul certainly was his avowed enemy, and pursued him with implacable malice; and therefore it would have been much more excusable in him, if he had eased himself of this adversary, when providence threw opportunities in his way, than to meditate the murder of Nabal and his family, (k) merely because he would not pay contributions to him, and his gang of desperadoes: And though reservedness to an enemy may be very commendable, yet his deep dissimulation to Achish, when there was no occasion for it; his entering into league with the enemy of his country, joining his forces, and going to war with him; promising him great services, if once they came to action; and when he was desired to withdraw, parting with the utmost reluctance; and instances of such a base and perfidious spirit, as a brave man should rather chuse to die, than be guilty of.

A. M. 2888, &c.
Ant. Christ. 1116, etc.
from 1 Sam. 1. to the end.

“ (l) In a word, however, David may be called in Scripture *the man after God's own heart*, yet in these, and several other instances, he is found sadly prevaricating, and much inferior to the character of Saul, who scorned to make use of any mean arts, even for the preservation of his life; who, instead of betaking himself to the enemies of God for shelter, (as David did) chose voluntarily to die, rather than to fall into their hands; and (m) though he knew assuredly that he was to fall in the battle, yet persisted in his resolution to stand by his fate, rather than betray his army, or expose his royal dignity to scorn.”

In the fourth chapter of this book of Samuel we read, that upon a defeat which the Israelites had received from the Philistines, the elders of Israel advised together in council what might be the occasion of their ill success; *Wherefore, say they, hath God smitten us to-day, before the Philistines?* The justness of their cause, they thought, was enough to intitle them to God's favour, how wicked soever they were in their lives; and therefore, without any thoughts of amending these, they devised another expedient that would not fail of securing them victory: (n) *Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord, say they, out of Shiloh, that when it comes among us, it may save us out of*

Answered by shewing why the Israelites sent for the ark;

(k) Ibid. xxv. 13. (l) Christianity as old as the creation, p. 244. (m) Josephus's Jewish history, lib. vi. cap. 14. (n) 1 Sam. iv. 3.

A. M. 2888, etc. Ant. Chris. 1116, etc. from 1 Sam. i. to the end. *the hand of our enemies.* (o) They had good reason to look upon the ark of the covenant as a certain token of the presence of God among them, and of his protection over them. They had had frequent experience of battles won by virtue of his presence, and lost in the absence of it; and whenever they had this token of the divine assistance along with them, they always esteemed themselves invincible. They remembered the story of the walls of Jericho (p) falling down by the power of this ark's seven times surrounding them. They had heard (q) of the defeat which their forefathers had suffered, when they presumed to march against the Canaanites without their leader, and without this ark; and were fond enough to imagine, that God himself might be looked upon as overcome, if the Philistines should have the advantage, when the ark of his presence was with them. By this means, therefore, they thought to interest his honour in the war, and make him responsible (as it were) for any disaster that should befall them; and upon these motives it was that they sent for the ark.

And why God suffered it to be taken by the Philistines.

But because they presumed to send for it, without ever consulting God, as they used to do upon all momentous affairs; because the iniquities of the people were become so enormous, as not to deserve any longer the divine presence among them; and because the flagitiousness of the priests (who were killed in defending the ark) had for a long time called for some judgment upon them; that therefore his predictions concerning the sons of Eli might be fulfilled, he permitted the ark to be taken, as thinking it more inconsistent with his honour to afford assistance to the wicked and presumptuous, than to admit of the profanation even of the most sacred things. What an affliction the loss of this ark was to the people of Israel we may learn from the sad fate of Eli, and his daughter-in-law, who both died for grief at the bare hearing of it: And therefore we may suppose, that a farther reason for God's permitting it, might be, to bring his own people to a sense of their apostacy and ingratitude to him, when they came to consider what a damage they suffered in the departure of this symbol of his presence, which was deservedly esteemed (r) the glory of Israel.

What afflictions the taking or withholding the ark brought upon the Philistines, the fall of their god Dagon,

(o) Calmet's Commentary. (p) Josh. vi. 4. (q) Numb. xiv. 44, 45. (r) 1 Sam. iv. 22.

the

the mice, the emerods, the pestilence, and other fore judgments, do abundantly testify; and therefore we may suppose yet farther, that God's design, in permitting this capture of the ark, was to demonstrate his power among the Heathens, and to let the Philistines know, that his dominion reached every where; that he was equally the Lord both of the conquerors and conquered; and that the pretended deities, whom they adored, in comparison of him, were of no avail.

It was from an intent, therefore, to illustrate his Almighty power, and not from any inability to preserve it; that God suffered this ark of the covenant to be taken; and tho' what the Jews call the *Shechinah*, or visible token of God's presence, which abode under the two cherubims upon the propitiatory, or covering of the ark, in the shape of the cloud, might not be so apparent, after it fell into the hands of the Philistines; yet that it had divine and miraculous power attending it, is evident by their own confession, who, upon seeing the destruction that its presence had occasioned, do frankly declare, that (s) *the ark of the God of Israel should not abide with them, because his hand was sore upon them, and upon Dagon their god.*

It was a particular prohibition, (t) That not only the common people, but even the Levites themselves, should not dare to look into the ark, or any other of the holy utensils belonging to the service of God, upon pain of death; and the severity of this law will not seem so unreasonable, when it is considered, that in every nation it was always accounted a great profaneness, and frequently attended with exemplary punishments, for such as were not initiated, (u) to obtrude into the mysteries of religion; and that, if the Philistines, for their irreverence to the ark, were treated with less rigour than the Bethshemites, it was because the former were not instructed in the laws of God, nor obliged to observe them.

It must be acknowledged indeed, that there is a mistake in our translation, as well as in several others. Bethshemesh is a place of no great note in sacred history, and (x) by Josephus it is called no more than a village; and therefore it is hardly conceivable, how it could contain such a number, as fifty thousand and threescore and ten inhabitants,

(s) Ibid. v. 7. (t) Numb. iv. 20. (u) Vide Hueti quest. alnet. lib. ii. cap. 12. p. 200. (x) Jewish Antiq. l. 6. c. 2.

A. M. 2888, &c. Ant. Christ. 1116, etc. from 1 Sam. i. to the end.

tants, or why God, who is goodness itself, should make such a slaughter among those who received his ark with so much joy, and testified their gladness by their oblation of sacrifices. To solve this difficulty, therefore, some have observed, that the words in the original, and according to their natural construction, stand thus : ———He smote of the people *threescore and ten men, fifty thousand men* ; where there is plainly wanting some particle or other, to make the sense complete. They observe further, that if this is to be taken for a total sum, the order of the words is plainly inverted, and that the thousands should go before the inferior numbers, as is usual in all languages ; and therefore, since there is a manifest defect in the copy, they think it not amiss to supply it with the particle *mem, out of*, which, in many other instances, is known to be omitted, and here makes the sense complete ; viz. that of the people of Bethshemesh, for their irreverence to the ark, he smote *seventy men out of fifty thousand*. For though fifty thousand men can hardly be supposed in so small a place ; yet, upon hearing of the arrival of the ark, the country might flock in from other parts, and in a few days make up that number ; and though possibly most of them might be guilty of the same profane rudeness, yet God, in his great clemency, might punish no more than seventy of them, and that on purpose to deter others from the like irreverence. For it is not unlikely, that these people might hold the ark in more contempt, since the time that it had been conquered, (as it were), and led captive by their enemies ; and for this reason, God might the rather exert his vindictive arm, on purpose to teach them, that this symbol of his presence had lost none of its miraculous power, by the ill usage it had met with in its absence.

Why the ark was not carried to Shiloh.

Upon the removal of the ark from Bethshemesh, (y) it is not unlikely that there was a general assembly of the elders of Israel, and that to prevent the like offence, the ceremony was performed with the greatest order and solemnity ; but why it was not carried to Shiloh, and repositied in the tabernacle, the most probable opinion is, that after the death of Eli, the Philistines had destroyed the place, and the tabernacle was removed from thence to Nob, where it continued until the death of Samuel. As Kirjath-jearim therefore stood at no great distance, was a place of considerable strength, and had a remarkable eminence in it, proper for the reception of the ark, thither it was ordered (y) Calmet's Commentary.

to be removed for the present, with a design, no doubt, to have it restored to its ancient seat, at a convenient season: but through the neglect of religion, as well as the disturbance of the times, its removal was deferred from day to day; so that, though David first brought it to the house of Obed-Edom, and then to his palace at Sion, yet we nowhere read † of its being replaced in the tabernacle any more.

When Samuel was highly displeased with the elders of Israel for desiring a king, and thereupon applied himself for advice, the answer which God returned him was this: A. M. 2888, &c. Ant. Christ. 1116, &c. from 1 Sam. i. to the end.

(z) *Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.* These are, no doubt, the words of an angry sovereign, resenting the slight put upon his government, and the indignity done to his person; and therefore, to give a full answer to the objection, we shall first consider the nature of the government they were under, and of that which they desired, and from thence deduce the several aggravations of their guilt, in being so importunate for a change.

† The future history of this sacred ark is this:—After the building of the temple at Jerusalem, Solomon had it removed from Sion, into a proper place that was consecrated for it, where it remained with all suitable respect, till the times of the latter kings of Judah, who gave themselves up to idolatry, and were not afraid to put the images of their gods in the holy place itself. Hereupon the priests, being unable to endure this profanation, carried the ark from place to place, that by this means it might escape the fury of these impious princes: but Josiah, who was a good man, and restored the true worship of God, commanded them to bring it back to the sanctuary, and forbade them to carry it into the country, as they had done. The Talmudists, however, have a tradition, that Solomon, having learned by revelation, that the Assyrians would one day burn the temple, which he had lately built, and carry away all the rich materials which he had placed there, took care to have a private hole made under ground, where, in case of necessity, he might conceal the most valuable things belonging to it from the knowledge of any enemies; and that Josiah, having a foresight of the calamities which were coming upon the Jewish nation, here hid the ark of the covenant, together with Aaron's rod, the pot of Manna, the high-priest's pectoral, and the holy oil; but that during the Babylonish captivity, the priests having lost all knowledge of the place where these things were concealed, they were never seen more, and were not in the second temple; *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Ark*.

(z) 1 Sam. viii. 7.

A. M.
2883, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1115, etc.
from 1 Sam.
is to the end.
The nature
of theocra-
cy. i.

Josephus, (a) in his book against Apion, has these remarkable words; "Several nations have their several forms of government, and their diversities of customs. Some governments are committed to a single person, others to a certain number of select men, and others again to all the people in general; but our lawgiver", says he, "has declared, that ours shall † be a theocracy, and has ascribed all rule and sovereign power to God alone." For though it was necessary, for the due execution of his commands, that there should be some visible minister between him and his people, such as Moses and Joshua were in the time of their administration; yet it is certain, that they never ordained any thing of moment without a special command from him. The same direction which was given Joshua, that (b) *he should stand before Eleazar the priest, who should ask counsel for him, after the judgment of Urim, before the Lord*, was required of all other persons that presided in public affairs. (c) In all cases of weighty concern, they were to have recourse to him, who always reserved to

(a) Lib. ii.

† As God's design in separating the Israelites from the rest of mankind, was to perpetuate the knowledge of himself, and the doctrine of his unity, amidst an idolatrous and polytheistic world; so was he pleased to stand in two arbitrary relations towards them, in that of a tutelar deity and protector, and in that of a supreme magistrate and lawgiver; besides the natural relation in which he stood towards them and all other nations in common: but how long this theocracy continued among the Jews, the learned are not so well agreed; some thinking, that from the first commencement of regal power, or especially from its settlement in the line of David, it ceased, as God's words to Samuel seem to import, *they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them*, 1 Sam. viii. 7. Whilst others imagine, that from God's first espousing the cause of the Israelites, in the time of their tribulation in Egypt, even to the coming of his blessed Son our Saviour Christ in the flesh, it all along subsisted, though with some abatements, sometimes with seeming interruptions; and to this they apply that famous prophecy of Jacob, *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come*, Gen. xlix. 10. i. e. The theocracy shall continue over the Jews, until Christ come to take possession of his father's kingdom. For what lawgiver was there ever in Judah, until the coming of Christ, but God, by the ministry of Moses? *Sentimens de quelques Theologiens, lettre v.*; *Simon's Histoire crit. de Vieux Test.*; and *Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses, vol. ii. part. 2.*

(b) Numb. xxvii. 21.

(c) Patrick's Commentary.

himself

himself the sole power of establishing laws, and appointing magistrates, and making war. Nay, so very desirous was God to shew himself to be king of the Hebrews, that there was no ensign of royalty belonging to earthly princes that, by his own appointment, was not provided for him, on purpose to engage the people's attention, (as the Commentator on Maimonides speaks), and to make them perceive, that their king, who was the Lord of Hosts, was in the midst of them.

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

What design God Almighty had in constituting himself the king of his people, is evident from the instructions which he gives Moses : (d) *Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel, Ye have seen what I have done unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles wings, and brought you unto myself: Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*

No government can certainly be imagined more happy, more safe, more free, more honourable, than that where, in the fountain of all wisdom and power, of all justice and goodness, presides; and therefore the least that we can say of the Israelites, in desiring to change this form for such a one as was in use in the nations round about them, *i. e.* for an absolute and despotic government, where the princes were tyrants, and the subjects all slaves, argues at least a great pitch of folly and indiscretion, a baleness of mind, an ingratitude of temper, a spirit of rebellion, and a secret attachment to the idolatrous practices of those people, whose king they were so eager to imitate. For, *Make us a king to judge us*, was equivalent in their mouths, (as (e) one expresses it), to what their forefathers demanded of Aaron, (f) *Make us gods that they may go before us*; because in this manner, he who best knew the secrets of their hearts, in his answer to Samuel, has expounded their meaning: *They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them; according to all the works which they have done, since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day, they have forsaken me, and served other gods.*

And the
crime of re-
jecting it.

(d) Saurin's Differt. xxv. vol. 4.; Exod. xix. 3, &c. (e) Saurin, Ibid. (f) Exod. xxxii. 1.

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

Why God
choic so
mean a per-
son as Saul
for their
king.

We have but one thing more to remark upon this subject, and that is, — That the manner in which they demanded a king, was no less culpable than the ends they proposed by it: for instead of consulting God upon an affair of this consequence, they went hastily to Samuel, and when, by fair remonstrances, he is attempting to dissuade them from so dangerous an enterprise, they turn importunately upon him, and say, *Nay, but we will have a king*; and this may be the reason perhaps why God gave them one in his anger, descended of the meanest tribe in Israel, and of the meanest family in that tribe, to shew them, that he himself was not satisfied with their proceedings, nor could be pleased with any thing that was extorted from him by undutiful importunities.

Why he re-
turned to a
private life.

The meanness of Saul's family indeed was the reason that some, who were present at his election, openly despised him, and said, (*g*) *How can this man save us?* And therefore it is not unlikely, that as these seditious men refused to submit to his government, he might leave the public affairs in Samuel's hands, and return to his father's house, and there live privately, until some opportunity of better establishing his authority should happen to present itself. But even in this interval, supposing he did betake himself to some rural employment, yet where is the great disparagement of this, when we find the same done in other nations, by persons of the like rank and quality? When we find your Curii, your Attillii, your Cincinnati, and several other illustrious Romans, leaving the plough to assume the reigns of government, and afterwards leaving the government to return to the plough.

His tallness
no mean ac-
complish-
ment,

It must be acknowledged, however, that Saul's external qualifications, *viz.* the stature and comeliness of his person, was no small recommendation to a people who desired a king, such as their neighbours had. For whatever we may think of the matter, the people of the east had always a regard to these in the choice of their kings; and accordingly Herodotus, having taken a review of Xerxes's whole army, after a short pause, declares himself thus: — “That (*b*) among such a multitude of people “there was not one, who, for tallness and goodliness of person, did deserve the throne so much as he”; and in another place, assures us, “that (*i*) the Ethiopians *always* e-

(*g*) 1 Sam. x. 27. (*b*) Herodotus, lib. vi. c. 77. (*i*) Ibid. lib. vi. c. 20.

"*seemed him, who was of the most advantageous stature, the* A. M. 2388, etc.
fitteft to be chosen king;" which cannot but remind us of Ant. Christ. 1116, &c.
 what Samuel says to the people, when he presents Saul to them: (k) *See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among the people;* for the historian hath told us before that (l) *from his shoulders and upwards, he was higher than any of the people.* from 1 Sam. i. to the end.

Nay, had I leisure to gratify the curious, I might shew, that not only in the east, but in the western and most polite countries, this tallness of stature, and gracefulness of appearance were always deemed no unbecoming qualifications for the regal dignity; and therefore we find Pliny, who certainly was a fine speaker, and knew how to single out the proper qualities in any great man, telling his audience, in his panegyric to Trajan, that "the strength and tallness of his body, the nobleness of his aspect, the dignity of his countenance, and the gracefulness of his speech, did every where denote and proclaim the prince:" As on the contrary, what notions the ancients had of a prince of a low stature, and mean appearance, we may gather from the fable which (m) Plutarch tells us the Lacedæmonians set upon their king, for marrying a little woman, who was likely to bring & Βασιλίσκος, ἀλλὰ Βασιλισσὴς, not kings, but kinglings, to reign over them.

It must be remembered however, that tallness of stature was not the only thing that recommended Saul to the kingdom. His father is said to have been (n) a mighty man of power; which though it may not signify his great wealth and interest in his country, (because (o) Saul himself declares the contrary), yet it doubtless denotes his strength, and courage, and fortitude of mind, which, in a great measure, he transmitted to his son. For who in war was more brave and undaunted than he, had he but known how to use his victories as well as acquire them? But here was his great misfortune, that when he was successful, he was too apt to be unmindful of what God had enjoined him. Who in peace was more prudent, and politic than he, till his fears and jealousies of David, mixed with an unhappy temper of blood, made him malicious and implacable? Nothing can be supposed more wise and discreet, than his (p) holding his peace, and taking

(k) 1 Sam. x. 24. (l) Ibid. ix. 2. (m) in the beginning of his book περί παιδων ἀργαῶν (n) 1 Sam. ix. 1. (o) Ibid. ver. 21. (p) 1 Sam. x. 27.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1Sam.
i. to the end.

no notice of the flights which were put upon him at his first election ; nothing more great and generous, than his answer to some who would have prompted him to revenge, after he had established his throne by a glorious conquest:

(q) *There shall not a man be put to death this day ; for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel.*

Nothing certainly was more different, than Saul's modestly declining the offer of a kingdom ; when elected, passing by indignities, and returning to a private life ; when called out to action, mustering his forces, leading out his armies, vanquishing his enemies, relieving his friends ; and when settled in peace, forgiving injuries, and conferring benefits ; and the same Saul, fullen and discontented with himself, false to his promises, jealous of his friends, listening to sycophants, quarrelling with his relations, attempting the life of his own son, murdering a whole city of God's priests, and instead of consulting the divine oracle, flying to the devil for advice in his distress : And therefore we need less wonder, that we find the beginning of his reign so prosperous, and the latter part of it ending in so sad a catastrophe.

That he deserved
God's severity to him.

Whether Saul deserved this fate or no, we may best perceive by a review of some instances wherein he is said to have offended God. In the beginning of the third year of his reign, the Philistines raised so powerful an army against him, that his own forces, for fear of them, deserted in great numbers. Gilgal was the place of their rendezvous ; and Samuel, who had hitherto transacted matters between God and Saul, had given him assurance, that, in seven days time, he would come thither, (r) *to offer sacrifices and peace-offerings, and to shew him what he was to do ;* but (as Abarbinel has observed) every one of these articles he transgressed. For (besides that he distrusted Samuel's word, or thought it scorn perhaps, that the king should stay for a prophet) instead of waiting till the appointed days were expired, he called for the sacrifices on the seventh morning ; instead of ordering a proper person to officiate, himself adventured to offer up the sacrifice ; and instead of inquiring of God in a regular way, he was determined to begin the war without any previous consultations : So that, in this behaviour of his, there were all the signs of pride and ingratitude, impatience and distrust, neglect of God, contempt of his prophet, and an apparent invasion of the

(q) Ibid. xi. 13.

(r) Ibid. x. 8.

priestly office ; upon which accounts Samuel declares, that (s) God would reject him, and not continue the kingdom in his family.

A. M.
1888, &c.
Apt. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

God, no doubt, by his divine omniscience, foresaw what other sins Saul would commit, and might therefore, without any breach of his mercy, have pronounced a peremptory sentence against him ; but the passage before us implies no such thing. It is no more than a threat, or a simple denunciation of what God would do, if he were not more observant for the future, and might have been revoked, had he not persisted in his disobedience, and committed a much greater offence against the divine Majesty, in the war against Amalek.

The opposition which these people gave the Israelites, while they were on their journey to the land of Canaan, provoked God to such a degree, That (as the historian relates the matter) he swore, that (t) *he would have war with Amalek from generation to generation ; and therefore commanded Moses to write it, for a memorial, in a book, and to rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, that he would utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven:* And when they were upon the point of entering upon the promised land, they were reminded of the same divine decree against that wicked people : (u) *Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt, how he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary, and he feared not God : Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven ; thou shalt not forget it.* In this passage we have some reasons assigned, why God was so highly incensed against the Amalekites. (x) They were descendents of Esau, and therefore, by pedigree, were allied to the Israelites, and of the stock of Abraham. (y) They seem to have broke off with the Edomites very early, and to have joined themselves with the old Horites, a nest of idolaters, that lived on Mount Seir ; and so turned apostates from the religion of Abraham. These apostates were the first that drew the

(s) Ibid. xiii. 14. (t) Exod. xvii. 13, 14. (u) Deut. xxv. 17. &c. (x) Gen. xxxvi. 12. (y) Scripture vindicated, part 2.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

sword against the Israelites, who were their brethren in blood, and without any manner of provocation, took the advantage, and came upon their rear, while they were feeble, faint, and weary, which was not only a great inhumanity, but done with an intent to defeat God's design in bringing up the people of Israel, and to hinder, if possible, their entrance into Canaan; for which reason the impiety of these people is particularly taken notice of, *viz. that they feared not God, but that their hand was lift up against the throne of the Lord, against the throne of the God of Abraham, their father, which was no small aggravation of their crime.* It was for these reasons then, that God had determined to destroy the whole race of Amalek, and had made choice of Saul to put his decree in execution: And if, to indulge his own covetousness, he thought proper to prevaricate in the matter, he became guilty of the like sin (to use the words of the learned Dr. Jackson) "as if a judge, or inferior magistrate, being intrusted to do justice in a matter unto which his sovereign had peremptorily and determinately sworn, should, upon a bribe, or other sinister respect, neglect his duty, and, as much as in him lay, make his master foresworn." And as a judge, that would dare to do this, deserves more deaths than one; so, considering the infinite difference between God and man, and the long train of wickedness which Saul afterwards ran into, the severity can hardly be thought excessive, in God's punishing his contempt of this great command, by the alienation of the crown from his family.

Why the Amalekites were so severely dealt with.

"But why should the Amalekites, for offences committed by their forefathers so many years before, deserve this punishment? Or suppose they did, why should young children and infants suffer as guilty, for the crimes of their parents?" Our blessed Saviour, in a case somewhat like this, has helped us to a solution of the former part of this question, when he tells the Jews of his time, that (a) *they built the sepulchres of the prophets, which their fathers had killed; that in so doing, they allowed or approved of their deeds; and that therefore the blood of all the prophets, which had been shed from the foundation of the world, should be required of that generation.* From whence we may draw this inference,——That when any particular people commit the same crimes that their ancestors did; when they

(a) Luke. x. 47, etc.

approve of them, when they imitate them, and, by the like actions, declare, that if they were in their circumstances, they would pursue the same steps, they are justly punishable, even in virtue of the sentence which passed upon their ancestors: And that the divine suspension of that sentence, in order to try whether they would reform and amend, is so far from being an hardship, that the longer it is continued, the more it is an instance of God's mercy, and patience, and long-suffering.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

Now, whoever looks into the conduct of the descendants of these old Amalekites, and considers the several oppressions which occasioned the exploits of Ehud, Gideon, Jephthah, and Saul, will soon perceive, that these later generations were every moment renewing the rancour and hostilities of their forefathers against the children of Israel, and consequently were very justly comprised under the sentence which had originally passed upon them.

(b) *Children indeed shall not be put to death for their fathers*: But this prohibition, we must observe, relates to men, and not to God. (c) Men, when they put a child to death for the sin of his father, assume an authority that they have no right to. The law which authorises them to punish the father, gives them no power over the life of the child; † but God is sovereign Lord and master of the lives of both. Men who kill the child, to aggravate the punishment of the father, can give the child no equivalent for the loss of his life; but God, in the future dispensation of things, can render him an ample compensation for it: and therefore, since in a general devastation, whether of war, famine, or pestilence, without a divine interposition for every particular person, the innocent must necessarily suffer with the guilty, it is satisfaction enough to think, that these innocent persons do not finally perish when they die, but are thenceforward taken under God's immediate care, and in the world to come, will find their retribution. (d) Those, of all others, who die in their infancy, (in what manner soever it be), have reason to bless

(b) Deut xxiv. 16.

(c) Saurin's Dissert. 30. vol. 4.

† Deus quidem, in lege Hebræis data, paternam impietatem in posteros se vindicaturum minatur: Sed ipse deus jus domini plenissimum habet, ut in res nostras, ita in vitam nostram, ut munus suum, quod sine ulla causa et quovis tempore auferre cuivis, quando vult, potest; Grotius, *De jure belli*, vol. 2.

(d) Le Clerc's Comment. in 1 Sam. xv. 3.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

Why Sa-
muel might
offer sacri-
fices.

God, what grief soever it may give their parents, for being delivered out of the miseries of this life, in order to be made happy in another.

Several of the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that after the death of Eli and his sons, Samuel, by God's particular election, succeeded to the high-priest's office; and this they are the rather induced to believe, because they read of his offering sacrifices in places distinct from the tabernacle; of his wearing an Ephod, which was a vestment peculiar to the priest; of his consecrating two kings, Saul and David; and find (e) the Psalmist placing him among persons of that order and distinction. But the more probable opinion is, that he was no more than a Levite, and, by birth, incapable of the priesthood, which was only annexed to Aaron's family; that there is no mention made in Scripture of his having any particular designation to that office; that there is no reason to think, that God would break through his own laws and ordinances, in favour of him, when there was no occasion for it, since Hophni and Phineas, when they died, † might have sons of sufficient age to succeed them; that his putting on an Ephod, was no more than what David did; his sacrificing from the tabernacle, what Gideon and Saul did; and his anointing kings, what both Elias and Elisha did: so that these little incidents of his life could never give him that character. And tho' it be granted, that the Psalmist has thought proper to place him in company with Moses and Aaron, yet, at the same time, he has taken care to point us out the difference between them; Moses and Aaron among the priests, and Samuel *among such as call upon his name*, i. e. who sing God's praise, which was the common employment of the Levites. Put the case then, that Samuel was no priest, yet it seems to be a privilege indulged to some great men upon some extraordinary occasions, to offer sacrifices, where there was neither the tabernacle, nor any altar, but

(e) Psal. xcix 6.

† It is generally supposed, but without any grounds, that the exercise of the high-priest's function was not entered upon till such an age; and that Eli's grandchildren were not as yet qualified for it: But Josephus (Antiq. lib. 15. c. 2.) informs us, that Aristobulus, the brother of Mariamne, was both admitted into that place, and officiated in it, when he was no more than seventeen years old; *Culmet's Comment.* in 1 Sam. xxv. 1.

what

what they themselves erected. Thus (f) Gideon and Ma-
naoh both, by the directions of an angel, made their burnt-
offerings just by their own habitations, and upon no other
altar than a rock; and yet, that they were accepted by God,
is evident from the miraculous fire that did consume them.

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

In most countries indeed, the priesthood was a privilege
annexed to the regal dignity, and even in the Jewish eco-
nomy, where the sacerdotal office was distinct. Thus Da-
vid, upon the reduction of the ark, sacrificed oxen and
fatlings (g), and Solomon, in the beginning of his reign,
and before the temple was built, sacrificed in high places
(h). But there is much more to be said for Samuel:
He lived in a place that was an academy of the prophets,
and whither much people resorted to be instructed in the
law. Shiloh was now laid desolate, and the ark, which
was the tabernacle's chief furniture, was separated from
it; so that till God had declared his choice of some other
place, the people were, in a great measure, at liberty where
to offer their devotions; and Samuel more especially, in
a city of so great concourse, and where he himself presi-
ded, was obliged in conscience to provide the people, in
the best manner he could, with a public place of worship.
He himself did but rarely, and upon extraordinary occa-
sions, officiate in the sacrifice, yet that, whenever he did
it, he did it with the acceptance and approbation of God;
is plain from the testimony of Scripture, and the success
which God gave him against his enemies, after he had per-
formed such an act of devotion: For thus the account is,
(i) *and Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a
burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord, and Samuel cried unto
the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him, and the Lord
thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philis-
tines, and discomfitted them, and they were smitten before Israel.*

* The Jews themselves acknowledge, that a prophet
is not subject to the ceremonial law, but may, at any time,
himself sacrifice in what place he pleases: And therefore,
when Samuel went to Bethlehem to anoint David, it can
not to be questioned but that he had a right to sacrifice

Why Sa-
muel might
pretend a
sacrifice at
Bethlehem.

(f) Judg. vi. 20. and xiii. 19. (g) 2 Sam. vi. 13.
(h) 1 Kings iii. 2, 3. (i) 1 Sam. vii. 9, 10.

* *Authentitas prophetæ, facit, ut sacrificium, ubicunque is adest,
et imperat, rite fiat; subsunt enim prophetæ imperio leges rituales,
statutibus Hebræis; Grotius, in 1 Sam. xvi. 2.*

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

there, though there was neither ark nor tabernacle in the place; nor can it be denied, but that one part of his errand was to offer the sacrifice which he carried along with him. He had indeed an affair of greater consequence to transact at the same time; but I cannot see under what obligation he was to discover that. (k) Secrecy is of great use in all important negotiations, and the concealing of one design, under the umbrage of another, is as just and laudable a practice, as the drawing of a curtain to keep out spies. Acts of religion indeed are sometimes made cloaks for iniquity; but it is hard to conceive, what possible prevarication there could be, in performing one act of obedience towards God in order to facilitate the performance of another. The short of the matter is, when there are two ends of any action, (as there were in the case now before us), a man may without any injury to truth, declare the one, and conceal the other; nor can any imputation justly fall upon God, for suggesting an expedient to his servant, in the execution of which there confessedly was no sin.

Why he
might slay
Agag.

And for the same reason, because it was by God's direction, or the instigation of his holy Spirit, that Samuel cut Agag in pieces, we cannot say, that this resentment carried him beyond the bounds of respect that was due to his sovereign. Agag had been a bloody tyrant, and was now cut off, not for the sins of his ancestors only, but for his own merciless cruelty. His death had been predicted above 400 years before, (l) by the prophet Balaam; but Saul, out of a mistimed compassion, and in opposition to the express commands of God, had thought proper to spare him. Here therefore was a fit occasion for Samuel to exert himself, and, notwithstanding the presence of his prince, to vindicate the honour of his God, by expressing a zeal suitable to (m) that of Phineas, in slaying Zimri, or of that noble band of Levites, (n) who destroyed the worshippers of the golden calf, though it does not necessarily follow, that he slew him himself, (o) because what he commanded might be called his own act, though it was nevertheless done by the public executioner of justice.

(k) Scripture vindicated, part 2. (l) Numb. xxiv. 7.
(m) Ibid. xxv. 7. (n) Exod. xxxii. 27. (o) Patrick's
Comment, in 1 Sam. xii. 33.

Some commentators have been so far carried away with the manner of the Scripture expression, viz. that (p) *an evil spirit from the Lord troubled Saul*, as to think, that he was really possessed with a devil, which at certain times came strongly upon him, and threw him into all the mad fits whereof we read: But it should be considered, that the word *spirit*, in the sacred language, is of a very extensive signification, and denotes frequently, not only the dispositions of the mind, (q) but those of the body likewise; that the custom of the Jews was to imagine, that every affliction, whose cause they were ignorant of, proceeded immediately from God; and that it is a very common thing to find the Scripture-phrase accommodating itself to this vulgar prejudice. Now, in our interpretation of Scripture, this I think should be a rule:—That when a passage is capable of two senses, whereof the one supposes a miracle, and the other a natural event only, the latter should take place, especially when there are no circumstances to determine us to the contrary. But now, in the case before us, (r) the frequent access of Saul's malady, the symptoms that attended it, and the remedy made use of to assuage it, do sufficiently denote, that it proceeded from a deep melancholy, or black bile inflamed; and that the man was hypochondriac, rather than possessed. Agreeable to this bad complexion of body was the natural temper of his mind, which through his whole conduct was suspicious, diffident, cruel, passionate, and vindictive. Add to this, that the remorse of his conscience, the menaces of Samuel, God's rejection of him, and his continual apprehensions of being either dethroned or put to death, by his competitor, confirmed still more and more the evil dispositions which his distemper engendered, and carried them by fits into downright madness: And as madness is occasioned by an atrocious humour highly inflamed, and diffused through the blood, and from melancholic vapours, which ascend to the brain, and make an alteration in its temperature, it is no hard matter to conceive, that the agreeable sound of a musical instrument, which occasions joy and self-complacency, should dissipate these bad humours, and make the blood and spirits return to their equal and natural motion.

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.
What Saul's
distemper
was.

(p) 1 Sam. xvi. 14. (q) Vide Job xvii. 1. and Hosea iv. 12.
(r) Calmer's Comment. in. 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

A. M.
2838, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

The power
of Music.

What the power of music is, to sweeten the temper, and allay and compose the passions of the mind, we have some examples from sacred history, but many more from the profane. As this same Saul was returning from Samuel, he met, at the place which is called (*s*) *the hill of God*, a company of prophets, playing on several instruments; and such was the effect of their melody, *that the spirit* (as the Scripture expresses it) *came upon him, and he was turned into another man*. When Elisha was desired by Jehoshaphat, to tell him what his success against the king of Moab would be, the prophet required a minstrel to be brought unto him, (*t*) *and when the minstrel played, it is said that the hand of the Lord came upon him*: (*u*) not that we are to suppose, that the gift of prophecy was the natural effect of music, but the meaning is, that music disposed the organs, the humours, the blood, and in short the whole mind and spirit of the prophet, to receive the supernatural impression. The truth is, common experience, as well as the testimony of the gravest authors, does prove, that there is in music a certain charm, to revive the spirits, mellow the humours, allay the passions, and consequently to dissipate that rage, or melancholy, which either fumes up into the brain in vapours, or overspreads the heart with grief and dejection. We need less wonder therefore, that we find (*x*) the Pythagoreans, whenever they perceived, either in themselves or others, any violent passion beginning to rise, immediately betaking themselves either to their flute or their guitar; that we find (*y*) Theophrastus declaring, that music is an excellent remedy against several distempers, both of the mind and body; (*z*) others, that Asclepiades, a renowned physician among the antients, was used to cure madness by the power of symphony; and (*a*) others again, that the most violent poison, that of the sting of the tarantula, has been expelled very frequently by this means. The only remaining difficulty is, how David, with his single harp, and unassisted with any other instruments, could effect such a cure upon Saul? And to satisfy this, I must be obliged to enquire a little into the nature of the Jewish music, which was possibly in vogue at that time.

(*s*) 1 Sam. x. 5. &c. (*t*) 2 Kings iii. 15. (*u*) Calmet's Comment, in 1 Sam. xxvi. 17. (*x*) Ælianus Var. hist. lib. 14. c. 27. (*y*) In libro *περί ἠθικῶν*. (*z*) Censorinus, De die natali, lib. 12. (*a*) *Vide* Saurin, vol. 4. dissert. 33.

Music.

Music, though an art of no necessity to human life, was certainly of a very early invention. Before the deluge, ^{A. M. 2888, &c.} Jubal is called the father, or master of those who played upon the harp, and † ancient organ, as the two Hebrew ^{Ant. Christ. 1116, &c.} words (*b*) in that place are generally translated. In the ^{from 1 Sam. 1. to the end;} time of Jacob, we find his father-in-law complaining of him, (*c*) that he had stolen away from him, and not given ^{The nature of the Jewish music.} him an opportunity of dismissing him honourably, with mirth, and with song, with tabret, and with harp.

(*d*) Moses, upon his passage over the Red sea, composed a song, which was sung in parts by himself, at the head of the men, and by (*e*) his sister, with timbrels and dancing, leading up the women. Samuel, upon his institution of the schools of the prophets, introduced several kinds of music: So that before Saul's election to the kingdom, (*f*) we read of the psaltery, and tabret, the pipe, and the harp, in use among them. The kings of the east made it a point of their grandeur and magnificence, to have men to play to them upon several occasions; and therefore we may suppose, that Saul, when he came to the throne, in some reasonable time, conformed to the mode. David, who was himself a great master of music, kept in his house (*g*) some companies of singing men and singing women, as the words of old Barzillai seem to imply; and Solomon, who denied his heart no pleasure, came not behind his father in this respect; for he had his (*h*) men-singers and women-singers likewise, and musical instruments of all sorts. Josephus tells us, that he had made four hundred thousand, merely for the use of the temple: and therefore we may well suppose, that he had no small variety of them, for the use of the musicians that attended his person.

M. Le Clerc seems to be of opinion, that the music of the ancient Hebrews was not very regular: "They were a nation," says he, "entirely given to agriculture, and had neither theatres, nor any public diversions

† This instrument in the Hebrew is named *Hugab*, and was a kind of flute composed of several pipes, of a different bigness, joined to one another; *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Musik*.

(*b*) Gen. iv. 21. (*c*) Ibid. xxxi. 27. (*d*) Exod. xv. (*e*) Ibid. ver. 20. (*f*) 1 Sam. x. 5. (*g*) 2 Sam. xix. 35. (*h*) Eccles. ii. 8.

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
2. to the end.

“ of this kind; all the use which they made of their music, consisted in singing some sacred hymns, which David instituted; but we have no reason to think, that their performances of this kind were either harmonious or methodical:” But now the learned Kircher has confuted all this. For (i) “ it is not probable,” says he, “ that such an innumerable quantity of musical instruments, made by the most skilful hands, should serve only to produce some rude and inartificial sounds. Among the Hebrews there was certainly a wonderful order of songs and chanters, a wonderful distribution of the fingers, and a wonderful agreement of words fitted to harmonious notes; neither is it likely, that all the instruments of one choir did perform their parts in unison, but that they made a various harmony, with an admirable and accurate contexture of the upper parts with their respective basses.”

But suppose we (as some) imagine, that they wanted the harmony of a concert, or several parts of music going on at the same time; yet it is much to be questioned, whether that simplicity of composition, which resembles nature most, is not a greater beauty and perfection, than that combination of several voices and tunes, which constitutes our concerts. For (to use the words of another author, in a science wherein I profess to be no adept) “ The ancients,” (k) says he, “ had as great a number of instruments as we; they had their symphonies, and voices of all sorts, as well as we; but then they had this advantage above us, that their singing voices and instruments neither drowned the words, nor destroyed the sense of what they sung. While their ears were charmed with the melody, and their hearts touched with the delicacy of the song, their minds were transported with the beauty of the words, with the liveliness, grandeur, or tenderness of the sentiments. So that, at one and the same time, they had all the pleasurable impressions and sensations, that the most exact imagery of thoughts and sentiments, joined with symphony, or a true harmony, could produce in their breasts;” and for this reason, it is rightly supposed by Josephus, that while David played upon his harp, he sung psalms and hymns to King Saul, whose words very probably were adapted to the occasion, and that both these put together were conducive to his

(i) Musurgia univer. lib. 2. c. 4. (k) Calmet's Dissert. sur la musique des anciens.

cure;

cure; though God, without doubt, who gave a blessing to his endeavours, was the principal cause of it.

That David's skill in playing upon the harp, in a great measure removed Saul's melancholy, is manifest from his retiring from court to his father's house, and betaking himself to his usual occupation of a shepherd. How long he continued with his father, the Scripture is silent; but a short time might be sufficient to impair the king's remembrance of him, especially when he appeared in another dress than what he wore at court, and was just now come off rough from a journey. He had played to the king indeed, and happily relieved his disorder: but who knows, but that he then wore an habit proper for his profession as a musician, and (as cloaths make a great alteration in a man) appeared now quite another creature in his plain shepherd's garb? Who knows, but that the (1) minister (whoever he was) that recommended him to the king, finding that his music proved medicinal to him, might take the freedom to send to his father, and request that his son might continue a little longer at court, even without the king's knowledge or direction? And it seems not unlikely, that the office of armour-bearer, (whatever it imported), was a place of honour and respect, more than strict duty and attendance, because we find David sometimes retiring to his father's house, as not obliged always to reside at court.

Without our supposing then, (as some commentators have done), that Saul's distemper had disturbed his head, and impaired his memory, we need but consider the humour and fashions of a court, the hurry of business, the multitude of servants, the variety of faces, and the shoals of comers and goers, that are every day seen there; and withal, consider the momentous issue of a battle lost or won, and what full employ the king or his chief commander must have for all his thought and attention, when an army is drawn up in array, and ready to engage; and then we may easily account both for Saul and Abner's wanting recollection, when they saw David disguised in his shepherd's coat, and now entering upon an action that was quite contrary to the character of a musician.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Chris.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i to the end.

(1) Le Clerc's Comment. in 1 Sam. xxvii. 55.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Chris.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

(m) But, after all, the words in the text say nothing of Saul's forgetfulness, of David, or that he inquired who he was. They only intimate, that he was ignorant of his family, and desired to be informed from what parent he was descended; and considering how many servants there are in every court, (especially in a lower station,) whose pedigree the king knows nothing of, and how apt we are all to forget the names of those who live at a distance, (as Jesse did from Saul), and with whom we hold little or no intercourse, we need not much wonder, that Saul, who had no concern for David's family before this adventure, should quite forget the name of his father, living in another country, and which he had cursorily heard perhaps, but never once fixed in his mind: But now that the son was going upon a desperate enterprise, and was (n) to have great riches, as well as the king's daughter; if he came off victorious, it did not a little behove the king to know something more of the parentage of this young champion, and into what family he was to match his daughter: And upon this presumption, there is no madness, no absurdity, no incongruity, in his bidding Abner "*(o) inquire whose son the stripling is.* It is a brave and gallant youth. I am charmed with his courage and behaviour. If he falls in the attempt, he shall have an honourable interment; if he succeeds, and slays the giant, he shall be my son in-law."

Why David
retreated to
Achish.

The Jews give a very romantic reason for David's going to Achish, the king of the Philistines, viz. that is was to demand an execution of the treaty, (whereby the conqueror was to have a sovereign power and dominion over the conquered), which Goliath proposed when he challenged the Israelites; and that upon this account, the chief ministers about that king were so alarmed at his arrival, *Is not this David, the king of this our land?* (p) as some take the words. It is apparent, however, from the context, that the land, to which these words relate, is Judea, and that David, at this time, was in no condition to make any high demands.

Saul's rancour and rage against him was so implacable, and now that so many were turned informers against him, his power to apprehend him was become so great, that

(m) Saurin's Dissert. sur le combat de David. (n) 1 Sam. xvii. 25. (o) Ibid. ver. 56. (p) Vid. Sol. Jarchi, ad 1 Sam. xxi. 12.

there

there was no staying any longer in his dominions; and therefore David's business was to find out some safe retreat. All the other neighbouring princes were at peace with Saul, and must have delivered him up, had Saul demanded him. Achish was the only one in hostility with him, and therefore his kingdom the most proper place for David's refuge, where, though he might not hope to ly long concealed, yet he might nevertheless promise himself kind quarter, from the advantages that would accrue to Achish, in attaching to his interest a person that was evidently the strength of the Jewish, and terrour of the Philistine, army. Hard was the fate of David, it must be owned, when he was forced to fly for protection to those whom he had reason to believe were his bitterest enemies; but many great men have been compelled to the same thing. Themistocles to go over to the Persians, and Alcibiades to the Lacedemonians, without turning apostates to the interest of their country.

Self-preservation is one of the first laws of nature, and therefore, if David, when he came to the court of Achish, found his life in manifest danger, I cannot see why he might not make use of any means, consistent with a good conscience, for the preservation of it. He chose to personate the fool, because he presumed that Achish would readily conclude, that the troubles he had suffered under Saul's persecution of him, had stupified his senses, and turned his head. But he was not the last wise man who put on that disguise; for (q) did not Solon, when he found that the Athenians were going to surrender Salamine, his native country, into the hands of the people of Megara, counterfeited the madman, that he might with more impunity take the freedom to divert them from it; And (r) Lucius Brutus, that wise imitator of the fool, (as he is called), made use of the same artifice, to escape the suspicion of Tarquin, who had already murdered his father and eldest brother, in order to seize on their great riches.

But supposing that there were no examples of other wise men to countenance this practice of David's; yet where ever did we read, in the Word of God, that strata-

(q) Diogen. Laertius lib. 1. in Solone. (r) Dionys. Halicarn. antiq. Rom. lib. iv.

A. M. 2888, &c. Ant. Christ. 1116, &c. from 1 Sam. i. to the end

gems were not allowable against an enemy? When the Israelites besieged Aj, God himself gave them orders to make a feint, as though they fled, that they might thereby draw the people out of the city; and can the difference be so great, in pretending to a want of courage, and in counterfeiting a deprivation of reason? A divine direction indeed was in the one, and we do not read that it was in the other case; but why might not God, who had David always under his immediate care and protection, put him upon this expedient, as the only escape he had for his life? Or if the expedient was matter of his own invention, since the circumstances he was in did absolutely require it, it cannot deserve our blame, according to that common dictum, that goes under no less a name than Cato's:

*Insipiens esto, cum tempus postulat, aut res;
Stultitiam simulare loco, prudentia summa est.*

This might be some apology for David's conduct at this critical juncture, supposing that he personated the fool or madman: But if we look into the Scripture-account of this transaction a little more narrowly, we may possibly perceive, that David did not dissemble, or act a part upon this occasion, but that he was really seized with a distemper; and that distemper, in all probability, was an epilepsy, or falling-sickness.

For whereas it is said of David, that (s) *he was struck to the heart* (for so it should be rendered) *at the words* which the officers of Achish said to their master, and thereupon *was sore afraid of the king*, least, at their instigation, he should put him to death; nothing is known to cause an epilepsy sooner * than a sudden and violent fright. Whereas it is said, in our translation, that (t) *he changed his behaviour before them*; the words in the Hebrew are, *his taste* (whereby some understand his reason) *was changed*; but the Septuagint seem to have hit upon the right sense, ἡλλοίωσε τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτῆς, *his visage or countenance, was*

(s) 1 Sam. xxi. 12.

* The author of the book, which goes under the name of Hippocrates, written professedly upon this subject, περὶ τῶν νόσων, among many other causes of this distemper, makes mention of a sudden fright as one:

Ἐπικατάρσσει δὲ ἐξ ἀδύλας φόβου γινωσκόμενα.

(t) 1 Sam. xxi. 13.

changed;

changed; for every one knows what a sudden alteration a fit of this distemper occasions in any one's looks. Whereas it is said in our translation, that he *feigned himself mad* in their hands, the Septuagint render it, *παρέρρετο ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτοῦ*; he trembled, and was convulsed in his hands, as having no power to direct their motions, which is another known effect of an epilepsy. Whereas, again, our translation says, that he *scrabbed*, or (according to the marginal note) *made marks upon the doors of the gate*, the Septuagint render the words *ἐπεσεν ἐπὶ τὰς θύρας τῆς πόλεως*, he fell down against the door of the gate, and the Hebrew word *Tava* implies, with such force and violence, as even to leave marks or prints upon them; so that he could not but bruise and hurt himself very much by these falls. Nor is this all; for there is something in the words of Achish, (if we will but adhere to the version of the Septuagint), that shows David's distemper to have been the falling sickness, beyond all controversy: For, whereas our translation is, *Lo, you see the man is mad, wherefore then have you brought him to me?* The Septuagint are, *ὅς ἴδετε ἄνδρα ἐπίλοπον, ὡς ἐπὶ ἀσθενάγει αὐτὸς πρὸς ἐμὲ; μὴ ἐλαττέραι ἐπιδόλων ἐγὼ;* Why did you bring this man before me? Ye see that he is in an epilepsy, and epileptic men I do not want. Why then did ye bring him to be taken with a fit in my presence? Had David all this while been only playing the fool, as our translation makes him, he might possibly have given Achish some diversion (as * fools in great houses were often kept to give diversion) by his awkward or frantic tricks; (u) but

* Tarquin the Proud kept L. Junius Brutus as a fool (for so he pretended to be) to divert his children with his absurd discourse and actions. But Anacharsis, who lived about three hundred years after David, complains of this custom among the Grecians, by telling us, that a man was a creature too ferocious to be designed for so ridiculous a purpose; and (to shew the continuance of this custom) Pliny, writing to one of his friends, who had complained to him, that, at a great entertainment, he had passed his time but very disagreeably, by reason of the kept fools, who were always interrupting conversation, tells him, that every one has his taste, but as for himself, he could never be delighted with such extravagancies, though some complaisance was due to those of another way of thinking; *Epiß.* 17.

(u) Saurin, vol. iv. Dissert. 34. in Mr. Dumont's letter.

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A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

the horror wherewith the king was struck at the first sight of him, and his indignation against his officers, for bringing him into his presence, are enough to make one believe, that his distemper had made him a frightful object: And therefore the king commanded immediately to have him removed out of his presence, and out of the palace.

Upon the whole therefore, we may conclude, that as David had the true symptoms of an epilepsy upon him, which, in all probability, was occasioned by a violent fright: God, in his good providence, might permit this distemper to befall him at this juncture, in order to facilitate his escape out of the hands of Achish, and as soon as the danger was over, restored him to his former health again. For this reason we find him, in those psalms, which he is thought to have composed upon this occasion, alluding both to the nature of his distemper, and to God's goodness, in preserving him in it, and delivering him from it: (*u*) *Great are the troubles of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of all: He keepeth all his bones, so that none of them is broken; and therefore (x) unto thee, O God, will I pay my vows, unto thee will I give thanks; for thou hast delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living.*

David's receiving those that flocked to him justified.

David, upon his escape from the court of Achish, not knowing of any other place of retreat, betook himself to the cave of Adullam, where he found it necessary to provide for his security, by putting himself upon some foot of defence. Jonathán, from full conviction, had told him, (as himself from frequent experience, had found), that his father at all adventures, would endeavour to take away his life. His family, by this time, were fallen under the displeasure of Saul, and were in danger of being all cut off (as lately were the priests of Nob) under pretence of a conspiracy against him; and therefore it is no wonder that his brethren, having this apprehension of danger before their eyes, resorted to him for their own security; no wonder, that in * times of national discord, refugees of all kinds, either

(*u*) Psal. xxxiv. 18. (*x*) Ibid. lvi. 12, 13.

* Tho' there be no comparison between the proceedings of a very righteous and a very wicked man, David and Catiline, yet it may not be amiss, upon this occasion, to take notice of what Sallust says of Manlius, Catiline's agent and ambassador. *Manlius in Etruria plebem sollicitare, egestate, simul ac dolore injuriæ, nocerant;*

either through their private wants, or the oppression of their enemies, a disaffection to the government, or a zeal for the next successor, should flock to David : Nor was David any ways blameable for receiving them, (y) since we have abundant reason to presume, that he took none under his protection, but such as were forced to fly from Saul's injustice and oppression, nor screened any debtors, but such as were under a real inability to satisfy their creditors, and were therefore necessitated either to leave their country, or lose their liberty. The submission and discipline wherein he kept his people, and the high notions of respect and reverence which he always infused into them for the government and person of the king, are an ample testimony that he meditated no defection or revolt ; and the debtors whom he secured from cruel prosecutions or slavery, he put in a condition to pay their creditors, by leading them against the enemies of Israel, from whom, in several expeditions, they returned laden with rich spoils.

There is one part, however, of David's conduct, that cannot so well be vindicated ; and that is, what passed between him and Achish, upon his second retreat to his court. We may suppose indeed, that, during this interval, an alliance was made between Achish and him, (though the sacred historian makes no mention of it), and that this new ally, hearing how violently Saul persecuted him, might, in hopes of making the breach wider, and of exasperating David against him, voluntarily invite him into his dominions ; but certainly we cannot but say, that David should by no means have gone. God had expressly commanded him by his prophet to return into the tribe of Judah, and, *varum rerum cupidam quod Sullæ dominatione agros, bonaque omnia amiserat ; præterea latrones cujusque generis, quorum in ea regione magna copia fuit, &c.* It is not improbable however, that the usage now prevailed among the Jews, which Cæsar tells us, anciently obtained among the Gauls, for those that were in debt, oppressed by tributes, or the tyranny of the great, to betake themselves to the service of some eminent man for protection. By him they were maintained, and to him they devoted themselves, under a solemn obligation to live and die with him. These were called, in the Gallic language, *Soldurii*, from whence *soldier* is derived ; and as they might be honest and good men, though they had the misfortune to be in debt, or could not submit to tyrannical treatment ; so, in all probability, David's companions were. *Vid.* The life of David, by the author of *Révelation Examined*.

(y) Calmet's Comment. in 1 Sam. xxii. 2.

A. M.
2883, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

at the same time, gave him assurance, that he would be his safeguard and protector. It was therefore an apparent diffidence of God's providence, which had been so long employed in his preservation, to make an enemy's country the place of his refuge; and a breach it was of truth and fidelity to his new ally, to make him believe that he was fighting against his foes, when all the while he was destroying his confederates.

But what can we say for his conduct, when he joins forces with the enemies of his country, takes the field with them, promises to act offensively, and looks upon it as a kind of slight and indignity to be dismissed? (a) *What have I done*, says he to Achish, *that I may not go to fight against the enemies of my Lord the king?* One would really suspect, by his asking the question, that he had an intention, not unlike that of the famous Marius Carionianus, who, to revenge himself of the ingratitude of his country, joined with the Volsci to destroy it. But if his intention was either to stand neuter, or to turn against the Philistines in the day of battle, his perfidy and ingratitude to Achish must be open and conspicuous.

In short, how well soever we may wish to David's character, there is no vindicating his conduct in this particular. Which party soever he had taken, he must have been culpable; and one party he must have taken, had not providence so timely interposed to preserve his honour, without injuring his conscience. However, if we would suppose any thing in extenuation of his fault, we must represent to ourselves a fugitive, pursued by a formidable enemy, and every moment in danger of falling into his hands; this fugitive kindly received at a foreign court, and protected by a prince that was in hostility with his persecutor; this prince, expecting of his refugee, in consideration of the favours he had conferred on him, that he should attend him to the war, and espouse his cause against their common enemy; and all this while, the other bound in gratitude not to be uncivil, and considering the dangerous situation of his own affairs, not daring to discover his real purposes. If we imagine this, I say, we must allow, that if, in any case, what they call a *Finesse* in policy were allowable, it was in this of David's, when he had unhappily brought himself into these circumstances.

It may seem a little strange, perhaps, that David, who in these, and several other grosser instances, could not but

(a) 1 Sam. xxix. 8.

be culpable in the eyes of God, should, nevertheless, be styled in Scripture, (a) *the man after his own heart*: But whoever observes the occasion of that expression, will find that it ought to be taken in a comparative sense only, and in derogation indeed to Saul, whose transgression, in sparing Amalek, the prophet Samuel was then reproving; that in executing his decrees upon the idolatrous nations round about him, David would be more punctual, and not so remiss as Saul had been; and in this respect would conform to the divine will, or be the man after God's own heart. This seems to be the primary sense of the words, though the common solution, viz. that though David was a great and grievous sinner, yet the severity of his repentance cleared him in the sight of God, and made an amends for the enormity of his transgressions, be not much amiss.

It cannot however with justice be said, that David was any ways culpable in sparing the life of Saul, even when providence seems to have put it in his hand. This trial God made of his virtue and clemency; and a glorious conquest it was, not only to overcome his own resentments, which were justly enough founded against Saul, but the arguments and instigations likewise of those about him: (b) *Behold the day, of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him, as it shall seem good unto thee.* God had delivered him into his hand indeed, but had given him no order, or permission, to slay Saul. (c) He had promised him the kingdom likewise, but would, by no means, allow him to ascend the throne by blood. His title to the succession was real and incontestable, but not allowed to be put in force, or himself to attempt, by ways of violence, the possession of the crown, as long as Saul was permitted by God to reign, and recognised, as sovereign, by the people. David as yet, being only a private man, had no authority to wage war against Saul; and though it be allowable for any one to defend himself against an unjust aggressor, and to repel force by force, yet this must be done only in order to secure his own life, and not to take away that of his adversary; for what the apostle says of judging, or censuring, is much more forcible in the matter of killing: (d) *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his*

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

And yet in
what sense
he was a
man after
God's own
heart.

His saving
Saul's life
justified.

(r) Ibid. xiii. 14. and xv. 28.

(c) Calmet's Comment. in 1 Sam. xxiv. 4.

and Jam. iv. 12.

(b) 1 Sam. xxiv. 4.

(d) Rom. xiv. 4.

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

own master he standeth or falleth ; for there is one lawgiver, who is able to save, and to destroy : Who art thou then that judgest another ? And these rules, which ought to be observed by private persons, are much more extensive, when they relate to a prince and his subject. The subject is obliged in duty, even though he be innocent, to bear patiently the ill-treatment of his prince. David, no doubt, was conscious of his own integrity ; but were it not for the preceding promises of God in his favour, and the orders which, from time to time, he received from the high-priest's oracle, it would not be so easy a matter to justify some part of his conduct. His flying from his country, inlisting men, and putting himself in a condition of defence, would, even under our mild government, be looked upon as seditious and rebellious proceedings : And therefore we may suppose, that David himself might not have so favourable an opinion of the course of life he was compelled at that time to follow ; might think that he gave some umbrage to Saul's Jealousy, and suspicion of him ; and might thereupon be the more inclinable to excuse the violence of his persecution, and to make no other use of the advantages he had against him, than to demonstrate his own innocence, and the groundlessness of the other's suspicions ; for such seems to be the sense of his own words : *(e)* *Wherefore doth my Lord thus pursue after his servant ? For, what have I done, or what evil is in my hand ? Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, David seeketh thy hurt ? Behold this day thine eyes have seen how the Lord had delivered thee into mine hand in the cave, but mine eye spared thee ; therefore cursed be they before the Lord, who make this difference betwixt us ; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord : For herein he not only pleads his own innocence, and good intentions towards the king, but, in some measure, excuses the king's conduct towards him, as being under the influence of evil counsellors, which both imposed upon the king's credulity, and compelled him to such a method of life as was far from being agreeable to his interest or inclination.*

And his resentment against Nabal, in some measure, excused.

Upon many accounts therefore, it was an act of his great and generous soul, for David to spare the life of his severest enemy : But tho' we cannot, in like manner, justify his indignation against Nabal, and the oath which he swore to destroy his whole family ; yet something may be

(e) 1 Sam. xxiv. 9, 10.

Offered in excuse of it, if we attend a little to what occasioned it, and the too common effect which such treatment (as Nabal's was) is apt to have upon such spirits as we may suppose David's to have been: David, while he continued in the wilderness of Paran, had given his men charge, not only to do no injury to Nabal's shepherds and herdsmen, but even to protect and assist them, in case they were invaded by any of the neighbouring Arabians; and now that their master was shearing his sheep (which was always a festival season), not far from the place where David was incamped, to show him the greater respect, he sent no less than ten young men of his company, to make his compliments to him, and, in the most civil manner, to request something of him, (as it was the custom to be generous and liberal at such a time as that), for the relief of himself and his followers, in this form: (*f*) *Peace be to thee, (as the young mens instructions were), and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all thou hast. Peace, in the sacred language, comprehends all manner of blessings, both spiritual and temporal; and therefore an higher compliment, (as we say) or a more affectionate salutation, could not have been devised: And now I have heard that thou hast shearers; and thy shepherds, which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there aught missing unto them, all the while that they were in Carmel: A sufficient argument, one would think, to engage Nabal's grateful acknowledgment; because it certainly was a matter of no small courtesy for a body of men in arms, and in want of the common necessities of life, not to take by violence what they could not be hindered from. Such men claim a kind of licence to do injuries with impunity; and therefore it ought to be deemed a great favour, when they do them not. David, and his men, however, are so far from magnifying their services to Nabal, that they only say, (g) they did them no hurt; whereas his own servants acknowledge, that they were a defence, and a wall to them, both by night and by day, all the while that they were with them keeping sheep. Upon this presumption, the matter of their request was, Let the young men find favour in thine eyes, (for we come in a good day); give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh unto thine hand unto thy servants, and thy son David. Words can hardly be invented more full of respect and*

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

(*f*) 1 Sam: xxv. 6. &c.

(*g*) Ibid. ver. 16.

A. M. 2888, &c. Ant. Christ. 1116, &c. from 1 Sam. i. to the end.

humility ; (*b*) for he pays a deference to Nabal, either upon the account of his seniority, or descent from the same tribe, and desires no rarities, no delicates, but any thing that first came to hand, and what he could most conveniently spare.

Nabal (as we just now hinted) was of the same tribe with David, and could not therefore be supposed ignorant either of his exploits in defence of his country, nor of the true cause of Saul's indignation against him : And yet, observe the rudeness and insolence of his answer to such a civil message, and humble request : (*i*) *Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse ? There are many servants, now-a-days, that break every man from his master. Shall I take the provisions I have made for my bearers, and give them unto men whom I know not whence they are ?* Nothing certainly could be more provoking than such an answer as this. The charging David with being a vagabond, and rebel to his prince, was a reproach insufferable to a man of a liberal spirit, who knew himself innocent : And therefore no wonder that David, upon the report of the messengers, who were themselves brought under the same predicament, and therefore had no reason to alleviate matters, was resolved, in his passion, to be revenged upon Nabal. For (*k*) there were four things in the matter before us that seem to have inflamed his resentment, and put him upon this sanguinary design. 1st, The want which both he and his companions at present laboured under, but hoped to have relieved out of the abundance of a wealthy man, who might easily have done it, without hurting himself. 2^{dly}, The deception he was under, in finding no compensation made him, for the care which he and his people had taken of Nabal's cattle; though perhaps he had given them his word and assurance that something of this kind would be done. 3^{dly}, The resentment which easily rises in the breast of any generous man, when, instead of thanks, and a grateful acknowledgment, he meets with contumely and opprobrious language. And, 4^{thly}, The vexation which an innocent man, conscious of his own merits, and the services he had done his king and country, must necessarily feel, when he perceives himself vilified, and treated as a scoundrel. † Fugitive and Slave are imputations of

(*b*) Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries. (*i*) 1 Sam. xxv. 10, 11. (*k*) Le Clerc's Comment. *in locum*. † The Life of King David.

the grossest nature ; and when retorted by an ungrateful person upon his guardian and benefactor, are provocations past bearing.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

Any one of these things singly was enough to irritate a man of a lofty spirit ; but all put together, could hardly fail of inflaming the mind to such a degree, as to make him lose the government of his passion, and fall into the most vindictive rage, which is generally more observable in military men, whose courage and spirits run high, and being too much accustomed to blood and slaughter, even in lawful wars, have not that dread and abhorrence of cruel and outrageous executions, as the rest of mankind have, who live more retired and peaceable lives.

It was to the sudden transport of David's passion then, and perhaps that exasperated by the instigations of his own men, that we are to impute his vow, and design of destroying Nabal's family : and though in this we cannot commend him,, yet certainly there is something praise-worthy in his speedy reconciliation, upon Abigail's first address and application to him in the room of her husband :
(1) *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me ; and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.* “ † In a word, “ the resolution against Nabal (as one elegantly expresses “ it) was the resolution of a mortal, not to say a military “ man, too much injured and provoked, and urged by necessity and self-preservation : the change and the thanksgiving, upon being averted from evil were the sentiments “ of an hero and a saint.”

The Jews indeed (as we quoted the objection from Josephus) give us an high commendation of Saul, and seem to prefer him before David himself, in regard to the magnanimity of his death. But it is much to be questioned, whether self-murder (which was certainly Saul's case) be an act of magnanimity or not. For, besides that the laws of all nations have condemned it, as abhorrent to the dictates of nature and reason, of self-love and self-preservation, the wisest of the Heathen world ever looked upon it as an instance of madness and brutality ; and with great wisdom have concluded, that such an action is so far

Saul's killing himself
blamed as
an act of
cowardice.

(1) 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33.

† The life King David.

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

from favouring of true courage and generosity, that * it is the sure effect of a weak and pusillanimous temper of mind; since true greatness of soul (as they justly argue) consists in supporting the evils of adversity, and not in shifting them off, which is a mark of a poor impatient spirit, sinking under the common calamities of life, and not knowing how to bear the blows of bad fortune. (m) *Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest the uncircumcised come and mock, or abuse me,* * was the request which Saul made to his armour-bearer, and shews that it was not bravery and courage, but the fear of insults, and a conscious inability to bear them with a becoming superiority of mind, that made him shun the storm, when he saw it approaching, by withdrawing from the stage of life.

As a viola-
tion of
God's law.

Saul's case indeed was very dolorous; but he had not therefore any authority to destroy himself. His life was a sacred depositum of God's, and not to be taken away without invading his right, and violating his laws at the same time. For whatever some may think of the silence of the Scripture concerning self-murder, there is no question to be made, but that it is included in the sixth commandment, under which Saul then lived. (n) The commandment forbids murder in general: and it is certainly as much murder to kill ourselves as to kill another man: And the reason which the Scripture gives, why we are not allowed to do it, in both cases, is the same, because (o) *in the image of God made he man.* For if I must not

* Si rationem recte consulas, non vera animi magnitudo nominatur, ubi quisque, non valendo tolerare vel quæque aspera, vel aliena peccata, seipsum interremerit: magis enim mens infirma deprehenditur, quæ ferre non potest vel duram sui corporis servitutem, vel stultam vulgi opinionem; majorque animus, merito dicendus, qui vitam ærumnosam magis potest ferre, quam fugere; *Aug. De civit. Dei, lib. i. c. 22.* And to the same purpose is that in an Heathen author:

Rebus in angustis facile est contemnere vitæ:

Fortiter ille facit, qui miser esse potest. Mart. Epig.

(m) 1 Sam. xxxi. 4.

* How much nobler was that resolution of Darius, who, finding himself betrayed, and that he was either to be murdered by his own subjects, or delivered into the hands of Alexander, would not however, be his own executioner. *I had rather, says he, die by another's guilt, than my own;* Curt. lib. v. c. 12.

(n) Fleetwood, against self-murder. (o) Gen. ix. 6.

shed

shed the blood of another, because he is made in the image of God; I must not shed the blood of mine own self, because I also am a man, and made in the image of God, as well as he. The reason therefore why we have not more frequent prohibitions against this sin is plainly this, — (p) That whatever sins or offences God, as a lawgiver, prohibits, he prohibits with a penalty, *i. e.* he affixes such a punishment to such a crime, and he, who commits the crime, is to undergo the punishment in this world, whether it be restitution, loss of limb, or loss of life itself. But now this can never happen in the case of self-murder, because self-murder prevents all punishment, (the man being dead, before any cognizance can be taken of his offence), and therefore prevents all laws concerning it; and can, consequently, only be included under general commands, and forbidden as a sin, whereof God alone can take cognizance in the world to come.

Since, upon the whole then, Saul may be said to have died in an act of cowardice, and in the violation of God's law, whereof he had no space to repent, it has been a matter of some inquiry, what we are to think of his salvation. The Scripture indeed tells us, that (q) *Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, and also for asking counsel of one who had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it, and inquired not of the Lord; and therefore the Lord slew him*: But it is doing a manifest violence to the sense of these words, to apply them (as some have done) to his final perdition, when they plainly relate to no more than his temporal death. The dangerous and destructive nature of self-murder is, that it makes repentance (the only revealed condition of man's salvation) impossible; but then we are to know, that in that inexhaustible fountain of goodness, there may be some uncovenanted mercy, some sovereign and prerogative grace, that may make favourable allowances for the distraction of men's thoughts or passions, the violence of their fears or troubles, or the over-bearing weight of any other temptation.

But (to determine this question more peremptorily) though it certainly be consonant to the mercy and goodness of God, to think, that no man shall answer for any mis-

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
1. to the end.

And whether he was properly favoured or no,

(p) Fleetwood, *ibid.*

(q) 1 Chron. x. 13, 14.

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

carriage which is wholly occasioned by the power of a disease, or the distraction of the brain, because whatever is committed, in such a case, is not the man's free act, and consequently cannot be his guilt; yet we have no reason to presume, that the case is not so with those, who, out of pride, or haughtiness, fear of miseries to come, or impatience under present sufferings, distrust of God's providence or despair of his mercy, lay violent hands upon themselves; because the act was both voluntary and vicious, and not to be amended by repentance: but without limiting thy goodness, O Lord, unto thy mercy we commit their souls!

Heathen testimonies in confirmation of some passages.

Thus we have endeavoured to satisfy most of the popular objections, which have been raised against several facts occurring in the first book of Samuel; and, for the farther confirmation thereof, we shall only instance in one or two ancient traditions among the Heathens, which in all probability derived their original from this part of sacred history. The Scythians, upon their return out of Egypt, passing through the country of the Philistines, robbed the temple of Venus at Askelon, and for their punishment (as *(r)* Herodotus tells us, they, and their posterity, were for a long while after afflicted with emerods. Whereupon *(s)* the learned Prideaux remarks, that the Philistines had till then preserved the memory of what they had formerly suffered on account of the ark of God. The Athenians, when the mysteries of Bacchus were brought out of Bœotia, having not received them with all the pomp and solemnity that the god expected, were smitten *(t)* with a disease in their secret parts, which resembled the malady of the people of Ashdod, and so did their cure too; for having consulted the oracle, they were informed that the way to get rid of their plague, was to offer unto Bacchus golden figures of the part wherein they were afflicted. The Grecians, at the taking of Troy, discovered an ark dedicated to Bacchus; and when Eurypilus (as Pausanias *(u)* tells us) adventured to open it, he found therein the image of the god, but was immediately deprived of his senses for daring to look into it; which seems to be a plain transcript from the irreverence and fate of the Bethshemites. (*x*) Clemens

(*r*) Lib. 1. (*s*) Connection of the Old and New Testament, part i. book i. page 44. (*t*) Vide Aristoph. Scholiast. in Acharn. act 2. (*u*) In Achaic. c. 19. page 572. (*x*) Stromat. 6.

Alexandrinus has observed, that the fable of Æacus's praying for rain in a great drought, and when Greece was sadly distressed for want of corn, was borrowed from that part of Samuel's history, where he is said to have called down thunder and rain, in the time of wheat-harvest, when the sky was all serene and clear : And therefore we need less wonder at the story between Saul and the witch of Endor, when we read of Circe, Medea, Erichtho, Manto, Antonoë, and several other women, who, in the Heathen world, became famous for their necromancy, and of the many votaries that resorted to them ; when we find Statius introducing Tiresias, as raising altars, making libations, and offering sacrifices, * with solemn invocations to the infernal gods ; and Homer himself spending a great part of (y) one book of his poem, in representing Ulysses as invoking the Ghost of this same Tiresias, and attending to the oracles which proceeded from his mouth. These things had their foundation in some early traditions, which at first arose from the facts contained in the sacred writings, which are confessedly the most ancient records we have ; and in this respect are an argument of their veracity, since we find them alluded to by subsequent authors, who had no regard to their authority.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

DISSERTATION III.

Of Samuel's appearing to Saul at the Witch of Endor's.

HOW long the profession of necromancy, or the art of raising up the dead, in order to pry into future events, or to be informed of the fate of the living, has obtained in the world, we have no indications from history. We perceive no footsteps of it in the ages before the flood ; and yet it is strange, that a people, abandoned to all kind of wickedness in a manner, could keep themselves clear of

An account
of the be-
ginning of
necroman-
cy.

* The words of his invocation are these :

Solvite pulsanti loca mura, et inane severæ
Persæphones, vulgusque cava sub nocte repostum
Elicite, et plena redeat Styga Portitor alno ;
Forte simul gressus, &c.

(y) Odyss. II.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
1 to the end.

this : But our account of these times is very short. The first express mention that we meet with of magicians and forcerers, is almost in the beginning of the book of Exodus, where Moses is soliciting the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt ; and therefore Egypt, which affected to be the mother of most occult sciences, is supposed to have been the inventress of this. From Egypt it spread itself into the neighbouring countries, and soon infected all the east : for as it undertook to gratify man's inquisitiveness, and superstitious curiosity, it could not long want abettors. From Egypt it is certain that the Israelites brought along with them no small inclination to these detestable practices ; and were but too much addicted to them ; notwithstanding all the care that the state had taken to suppress them, and the provision which God had made, by establishing a method of consulting him, to prevent their hankering after them.

The Jewish
laws against
it.

The injunction of the law is very express——— (z)
*When thou art come into the land, which the Lord thy God
giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations
of those nations. There shall not be found among you any
that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchant-
er, or a witch, or a charmer, or a * consulter with familiar
spirits,*

(z) Deut. xviii. 9. &c.

* What our English translation makes a *familiar spirit*, the Septuagint and Vulgate render *the spirit of Python* ; but the Hebrew calls it *the spirit of Ob*. The word *Ob*, or *Oboth*, in its primary signification, is a *bottle*, or *vessel of leather*, wherein liquors were put ; and it is not unlikely that this name was given to witches and wizards, because, when they were in their fits of enthusiasm, they swelled in their bellies like a bottle. The occasion of this swelling is said by some to proceed from a dæmon's entering into the forcerers *par partes genitales*, and so ascending to the bottom of her stomach. from whence, at that time, she uttered her predictions ; and for this reason the Latins call such persons *ventriloqui*, and the Greeks *Ἐνυαγέμβοι*, i. e. *people who speak out of their bellies*. That there have been such people as these, might be shewn by several examples both in ancient and modern history ; but, at present, we shall content ourselves with one taken from Cælius Rhodiginus, (Lecton. antiq. lib. viii. c. 10.), his words are to this effect:—
“ While I am writing,” says he, “ concerning ventriloquous persons, there is, in my own country, a woman of a mean extract, who has an unclean spirit in her belly, from whence may be heard a voice, not very strong indeed, but very articulate and intelligible.”

spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer; for all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord: And therefore their punishment was this:—(a) *A man, or a woman, that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death. They shall stone them with stones. their blood shall be upon them.* Nor was it only the practisers of such vile arts, but those likewise that resorted to them upon any occasion, were liable to the same punishment; for (b) *the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a-whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people, saith the Lord.*

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, etc.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

Such was the severity of the Jewish laws against those who either practised, or encouraged, any manner of magical arts; and it must be said in Saul's commendation, that he had put the laws in execution against such vile people; he had destroyed and drove away (c) *those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land*; and yet, (observe the weakness as well as the wickedness of the man!), when himself fell into distress, and had abundant reason to believe that God had forsaken him, he flies to one of these creatures for relief, and requests of her to raise up his old friend Samuel, as expecting, very probably, some advice from him: But whether this was really done or no, or if done, in what manner it was

“telligible. Multitudes of people have heard this voice, as well as myself, and all imaginable precaution has been used in examining into the truth of this fact: *Quando futuri avida, portentus mens, sæpe accersitam ventriloquam, ac exutam amicum, ne quid fraudis occultaret, inspectare et audire concupivit.* This Dæmon (as our author adds) is called *Cincinnatiulus*, and when the woman calls upon him by his name, he immediately answers her.” In like manner several ancient writers have informed us, that in the times of Paganism, evil spirits had communion with these *ventriloquæ per partes secretiores*; but at present, we shall only take notice of a remarkable passage in St. Chrysostom, which we chuse to give the reader in Latin: *Traditur Pythia femina fuisse, quæ in Tripodes sedens expansa malignum spiritum per interna immisissum, et per genitales partes subeuntem excipiens, furore repletur ipsaque resolutis crinibus baccharetur, ex ore spumam emittens, et sic furoris verba loquebatur, &c*; Saurin, vol. 4. dissert. 36.

(a) Levit. xx. 27. (b) Ibid. ver. 6. (c) 1 Sam. xxviii. 3.

A. M. effected, are points that have so much exercised the heads
 2888, etc. and pens, both of ancient and modern, both of Jewish and
 Ant. Chris. Christian, writers, that little or nothing new can be said
 1116, etc. upon them; and therefore all that I shall endeavour to
 from 1 Sam. do, will be to reduce their several sentiments into as nar-
 3. to the end. row a compass, and to state them in as fair a light, as I
 can, by inquiring into these three particulars:

1. Whether there was a real apparition.
2. What this apparition (if real) was; and,
3. By what means, and for what purposes, it was effect-
 ed.

The argu-
 ments of
 those who
 take the
 whole for a
 cheat of the
 witch.

1. It cannot be denied indeed, but that those who ex-
 plore the reality of the apparition, and make it to be all
 nothing but a cheat and juggle of the forceress, have
 found out some arguments, that at first sight make a tole-
 rable appearance. They tell us (*d*) that the sacred history
 never once makes mention of Saul's seeing Samuel with
 his own eyes. It informs us indeed, that Saul knew him
 by the description which the woman gave, and that he
 held, for some considerable time, a conversation with
 him; but since it is no where said that he really saw him,
 "Why might not the woman counterfeit a voice, and
 "pretend it was Samuel's? When Saul asked her to *raise
 "him.

(*d*) Scot and Webster upon Witchcraft.

* What forms of enchantment were anciently used in the prac-
 tice of necromancy, we are at a loss to know; because we read of
 none that the Pythonefs of Endor employed; but this might prob-
 ably happen, because the Ghost of Samuel came upon her sooner
 than she expected, and before she had begun her incantations.
 That however there were several rites, spells, and invocations used
 upon these occasions, we may learn from almost every ancient au-
 thor; but from none more particularly than from Lucan, who
 brings in Erichtho animating a dead body, in order to tell young
 Pompey the fate of the civil war. The ceremonies she uses for
 this purpose, are thus described in our excellent translator of that
 poet.

This said: she runs the mangled carcase o'er,
 And wipes from ev'ry wound the crusty gore;
 Now with hot blood the frozen breast she warms,
 And with strong lunar dews confirms her charms.
 Anon she mingles ev'ry monstrous birth,
 Which nature, wayward and perverse, brings forth.
 Nor entrails of the spotted lynx she lacks,
 Nor bony joints from fell Hyæna's backs;

Nor

“ him up Samuel, *i. e.* to disturb the ghost of so great A. M.
 “ a prophet, she might think he was no common man ; 2888, etc.
 “ and when (e) he swore unto her by the Lord, that he Ant. Chris.
 “ would defend her from all danger, he gave her inti 1116, etc.
 “ timation enough that he was the king: (f) The crafty from 1 Sam. i. to the end.
 “ woman therefore, having picked up the knowledge of
 “ this, might retire into her closet or cell, and there;
 “ having her familiar, *i. e.* some cunning artful man, to
 “ make proper responses, in a different voice, might ea-
 “ sily impose upon one who was distracted with anxious
 “ thoughts, and had already shewn sufficient credulity,

Nor deers hot marrow, rich with fraky blood,
 Nor foam of raging dogs, that fly the flood.
 Her store the tardy Remora supplies.
 With stones from eagles warm, and dragons eyes;
 Snakes that on pinions cut their airy way,
 And nimbly o'er Arabian deserts prey, &c.
 To these she joins dire drugs without a name,
 A thousand poisons never known to fame;
 Herbs, o'er whose leaves the hag her spells had sung,
 And wet with cursed spittle, as they sprung.
 With every other mischief most abhor'd,
 Which hell, or worse Erichtho, could afford.

Having thus prepared the body, she makes her invocation in these words:

Ye furies ! and thou black, accursed hell !
 Ye woes, in which the damn'd for ever dwell !
 Chaos, the world's and form's eternal foe !
 And thou, soie arbiter of all below,
 Pluto ! whom ruthless fates a god ordain,
 And doom to immortality of pain.
 Ye fair Elysian mansions of the blest,
 Where no Thessalian charmer hopes to rest !
 Styx ! and Persephonè, compell'd to fly
 Thy fruitful mother, and the cheerful sky !
 Third Hecate ! by whom my whispers breathe
 My secret purpose to the shades beneath !
 Thou greedy dog, who at the infernal gate,
 In everlasting hunger still must wait !
 And thou, old Charon, horrible, and hoar !
 For ever lab'ring back from shore to shore, &c.
 Hear all ye powers ! if e'r your hell rejoice
 In the lov'd horrors of this impious voice, &c.
 Hear, and obey, &c.

Pharsalia, lib. 6.

(e) 1 Sam. xxviii. 10.
 1 Sam. xxviii. *passim.*

(f) *Vid. Le Clerc's Comment. in*

A. M. 2888, etc. Ant. Christ. 1116, etc. from 1 Sam. i. to the end.

“ in thinking there was any efficacy in magical operations to evocate the dead.

“ The controversy between Saul and David every one knew; nor was it now become a secret, that the crown was to devolve upon the latter : And therefore that part of the discourse which passed between Saul and Samuel, any man of a common genius might have hit off, without much difficulty. Endor was not so far distant from Gilboa or Shunem, but that the condition of the two armies might easily be known, and that the Philistines were superior both in courage and numbers ; and therefore his respondent, without all peradventure, might prognosticate Saul’s defeat ; and though there was some hazard in the last conjecture, viz. that he and his sons would die in battle, yet there was this advantage on the side of the guess, that they were all men of known and experienced valour, who would rather sacrifice their lives, than turn their backs upon their enemies.” Upon the whole therefore, the maintainers of this hypothesis conclude, that as there is no reason, so there was no necessity for any miraculous interposition in this affair, since this is no more than what any common gipsy, with another in confederacy to assist her, might do to any credulous person who came to consult her.

Answered
by others.

They who undertake to oppose this opinion, lay it down for a good rule in the interpretation of Scripture,—— That we should, as far as we can, adhere to the primary sense of the words, and never have recourse to any foreign or singular explication, but where the literal is inconsistent either with the dictates of right reason, or the analogy of faith. Let any indifferent person then, say they, take into his hand the account of Saul’s consulting this sorceress, and upon the first reading it, he must confess, that the notion which it conveys to his mind, is that of a real apparition ; and since the passages that both precede and follow it, are confessedly to be taken in their most obvious meaning, why should a strange and forced construction be put upon this? (g) Have we not as much reason to entertain a good opinion of the author of this history, his ability, his integrity, his knowledge of what he wrote about, and his undesigning to deceive us, as we can have of any critic or commentator upon it? And therefore, when he gives us to understand that the woman saw Samuel, upon what

presumption are we led to disbelieve it? Saul and his companions might possibly be deceived by an impostor in Samuel's guise; but was the sacred historian therefore deceived, or did he mean to deceive us, when he gives us this plain account of an apparition? Saul was a bold man, and too sagacious to become a dupe to a silly woman. He and his two attendants came upon her by night, and before she was prepared to act any juggler or imposture. They were too well acquainted with the voice, and stature, and figure of Samuel, for any other to personate him, without being detected. But admitting the cheat passed on them, how can we think but that the author of this account, who pretends to relate the transaction as it really happened, and is supposed to have wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, would, in some measure, have let us into the secret of this imposture? His business doubtless was to expose such practices, as far as truth would allow; and therefore it is unaccountable (unless he meant to delude us with a false persuasion) that he should omit every thing that tended to discover the fraud, and in his narration, insert every thing that tended to confirm the reality of the prophet's appearance.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

(b) That spirits of another world may assume such vehicles as may admit them to a sensible commerce with us, in like manner as our spirits are clothed with these bodies of ours, the best philosophy will admit; and that they have done so upon extraordinary occasions, (i) the appearance of Moses and Elias, and their conversing with our Saviour on the mount, do abundantly testify. And therefore if God, for wise reasons of his providence, thought fit either to appoint, or permit Samuel to appear to Saul upon this occasion, there seems to be no more difficulty in the thing than his appearing to him at any other time, while he was alive, and subsisting in the world: For Saul saw his spirit then no more than he did now, and his spirit was every whit as able to bear a body as it was then.

It is owned indeed, that, according to the series of the narration, Saul did not see the apparition (be it what it will) so soon as the woman did, because probably the woman's body, or some other object, might interpose between him and the first appearance; or perhaps because

(b) The History of the life of King David, vol. 1. (i) Matth. xvii. 3.

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

the vehicle, which Samuel assumed upon this occasion, was not, as yet, condensed enough to be visible to Saul, though it was to the woman : But that he did actually see him is manifest, because when he *perceived* (which word in the original signifies *seeing* so as to be assured of our object) *that it was Samuel, † he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself* ; which a man is not apt to do to bare ideas or imaginations.

Persons of this woman's character, who are under the displeasure of the government, generally affect obscurity, live privately, and are little acquainted with affairs of state : But suppose her to have been never so great a politician, and never so intimate with what had passed between Saul and Samuel heretofore, never so well assured that God had rejected him, and elected David in his stead ; yet how could she come to the knowledge of this, *viz.* That the battle should be fought the next day, the Israelites be routed, Saul and his sons slain, and their spoils fall into the enemy's hands ; since each of these events (even in the present situation of Saul's affairs) were highly casual and uncertain ? For might not this prince lose a battle, without losing his life ? Or, if he himself fell in the action, why must his three sons be all cut off in the same day ? Whatever demonstrations of innate bravery he had given in times past, after such severe menaces as he now received from the apparition ; prudence, one would think, would have put him upon providing for his safety, either by chicaning with the enemy, or retiring from the field of battle, without going to expose himself, his sons, and his

† That *Saul's stooping to the ground, and bowing himself*, was a certain indication of his seeing Samuel, is apparent from several expressions of the same nature in the sacred history. Thus, when Jacob met Esau, the text tells us, that *the handmaids, and Leah, and Rachel, and their children bowed themselves*, Gen xxxiii. 6. 7. When David arose out of his hiding-place, upon the signal that Jonathan gave him, the text tells us, that *he fell with his face to the ground, and bowed himself*, 1 Sam. xx. 41. And when the messenger from Saul's camp came to David at Ziklag, the text tells us, that *he fell to the earth, and did obeisance*, 2 Sam. i. 2. But the text takes no notice, either of the messenger's seeing David, or David's seeing Jonathan, or Jacob's family seeing Esau. This is sufficiently implied in their making their obeisance to them ; because it is incongruous to suppose, that any would bow, and shew other tokens of outward reverence and respect, to persons they did not see ; *The History of the life King David, vol. 1.*

whole army, to certain and inevitable death. These are things which no human penetration could reach, and which only he, who is the absolute and almighty ruler of all causes and events, could either foresee or foretell : And how unlikely is it, that God Almighty should make use of this forceress (*k*) as a prophetess, and give her the honour of revealing his counsels, when, at the same time, he concurred with her in the imposition put upon Saul, by making him believe that Samuel appeared and talked, when there was no Samuel there ?

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

But the truth is, those menacing predictions, how proper soever for a messenger sent from God to utter, were highly imprudent, either in this witch's, or her accomplice's mouth : For, since they knew nothing of futurity, and were, at the best, but put to conjecture, it is much more reasonable to believe, that at such a juncture as this, (*l*) they would have bethought themselves of flattering the King, and giving him comfort, and promising success, and not of thundering out such comminations against him, as might probably incense him, but could do themselves no good. They could not but know, that the temper of most kings is to hate to hear shocking truths, and to receive with the utmost despite those that bring them ill news : And therefore it is natural to suppose, that had these threatening replies been of the woman's or her confederate's forming, they would have given them quite another turn, and not run the hazard of disobliging the king to no purpose, by laying an additional load of trouble upon him. In short, (*m*) the whole tenour of Samuel's speech to King Saul is too rough and ungrateful, too grave and solemn, I may also add, too full of truth and reality, ever to have proceeded from their contrivance and invention only.

The woman, by her courteous entertainment of Saul, seems to be a person of no bad nature ; and therefore, if she had any accomplice, who understood to make the most of his profession, his business at this time must have been to sooth and cajole the king, which would have both put money in his pocket, and saved the credit of his predictions. For, had he foretold him of success and victory, and a happy issue out of all his troubles, he and the woman had been sure of reputation, as well as far-

(*k*) Waterland's Sermons, vol. ii. (*l*) Calmet's Dissert.
sur l'apparition de Samuel. (*m*) Waterland, Ibid.

A. M.
2888, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

ther rewards, in case it had happened to prove so; and if it had not, (since no one was privy to their communion) the falsehood of the prediction, upon Saul's defeat and death, must, in course, have been buried with him.

From these reasons then, we may infer, that the woman in this transaction did not impose upon Saul, since he had a plain sight of the apparition: What the apparition foretold him was above human penetration; and (upon the supposition of a juggle) the witch and her confederate would have certainly acted clean contrary to what they did. And so the next

The arguments of those who pretend this apparition was diabolical.

2. Inquiry meets us, namely, What this apparition was? Some of the ancient doctors, both of the Jewish and Christian church, have made an evil angel the subject of this apparition, in pure regard to the honour of God. "God," say they, "had sufficiently declared his hatred against necromancy, and all kinds of witchcraft, in the severe laws which he enacted against them; but it is certainly denying himself, and cancelling his own work, to seem in the least to countenance or abet them, as he necessarily must do; if, on the evocation of an old hag, any messenger is permitted to go from him. Far be it from us, therefore, to have such conceptions of God. He is holy, and just, and uniform in all his ways; and therefore this coming at a call, and doing the witch's drudgery, must only appertain to some infernal spirit, who might possibly find in his account in it at last. It was one of this wicked crew, that either assumed a phantom, or a real body, appeared in a mantle like Samuel, spake articulately, and held this conversation with Saul; which, considering his knowledge and foresight of things, he was well enough qualified to do, notwithstanding the sundry predictions relating to future contingencies, which are contained in it."

Answered,
by shewing
it was not
the devil,

How far the honour of God is concerned in this transaction, will more properly fall under our next inquiry: In the mean time, I cannot but observe, that whatever incongruity may be supposed in the real appearance of Samuel, it is not near so much, as to find one of the apostate spirits of hell expressing so much zeal for the service of the God of heaven, and upbraiding Saul with those very crimes which he himself tempted him to commit; as to find this wicked and impure spirit making use of the name of God (that

(that sacred and tremendous name whose very pronunciation was enough to make him quack and shiver) no less than seven times in this intercourse with Saul, without any manner of uneasiness or hesitation; as to find this angel of darkness and father of lies prying into the womb of futurity, and determining the most casual events positively and precisely. (n) We do not indeed deny, but that the devil's knowledge is vastly superior to that of the most accomplished human understanding; that his natural penetration, joined with his long experience, is such, that the greatest philosophers, the subtlest critics, and the most refined politicians are mere novices in comparison of him; Yet what genius, (however exalted and improved), without a divine revelation, could (as we said before) be able to foretell things that were lodged in God's own breast, viz. the precise time of the two armies engaging, the success and consequence of the victory, and the very names of the persons that were to fall in battle? This is what the apparition plainly revealed to Saul: And yet this we dare maintain, is more than any finite understanding, by its own mere capacity, could ever have been able to find out.

But (without this multitude of arguments) if we are to take the Scripture in its plain and literal sense, read we over the story of Saul and the witch of Endor never so often, we shall not so much as once find the devil mentioned in it. And therefore it is somewhat wonderful, that he should be brought upon the stage by many learned men, merely to solve a difficulty, which, upon examination, appears to be none at all. But now, on the other hand, it appears, that, through the whole narration, Samuel is the only thing that is mentioned. It is Samuel whom Saul desires to be called up; Samuel, who appeared to the woman; Samuel, whom the woman describes; Samuel, whom Saul perceives, and bows himself to, with whom he converses so long, and because of whose words he was afterwards so sore afraid.

The Scripture indeed speaks sometimes according to the appearance of things, and may call that by the name of Samuel, which was only the semblance or phantom of him. But, that this cannot be the sense of the matter here, we have the testimony of the wise son of Sirach, (an excellent interpreter of canonical Scriptures), who tells us expressly,

(n) Saurin, vol. iv. dissert. 36.

A. M. that (o) Samuel, *after his death, prophesied, and shewed* 2888, etc. *the king his end*; pursuant to what we read in the version Ant. Chris. of the Septuagint, viz. that (p) Saul *asked counsel of one* 1116, &c. *that had a familiar spirit, and Samuel answered him*. So that, from 1 Sam. 1, to the end, upon the whole, we may be allowed to conclude, that it was the real soul of Samuel, cloathed in some visible form, which, at this time appeared to the king of Israel: But by what means, or for what purposes it appeared, is the other question we are now to determine.

That Samuel was not raised up by the devil;

3. Several of the (q) fathers of the Christian church were of opinion, that the devil had a certain limited power over the souls of the saints, before Jesus Christ descended into hell, and rescued them from the tyranny of that prince of darkness. (r) St. Austin, in particular, thinks, that there is no absurdity in saying, that the devil was as able to call up Samuel's soul, as he was to present himself among the sons of God, or to set our Saviour on one of the pinnacles of the temple; and a (s) learned Jewish doctor, supposes, that devils have such power over human souls for the space of a year after their departure, as to make them assume what bodies they please; and thereupon he concludes, (but very erroneously), that it was not a year from the time of Samuel's death to his appearance. But these are such wild and extravagant fancies, as deserve no serious confutation. It is absurd to say, that the souls of saints (such as we are now speaking of) were ever in hell, and more absurd to say, that if they are in heaven, it is in the power of any magical, nay, of any diabolical incantations to call them down from thence. (t) Great, without all doubt, is the power of apostate angels; but miserable, we may say, would the state of the blessed be, if the other had any licence to disturb their happiness, when, and as long as they pleased: For "God forbid," (u) says Tertulian, "that we should believe, that the soul of any holy man, much less of a prophet, should be so far under his disposal, as to be brought up at pleasure by the power of the devil."

not by the witch's enchantments; but by God's direction.

Since the devil then has no power to disturb the happiness of souls departed, this apparition of Samuel could not proceed from any magical incantments of the sorcerers,

(o) Ecclus. xli. 20. (p) 1 Chron. x. 13. (q) Justin. Martyr. in Dial. cum Tryph.; and Origen, in 1 Sam. cap. 28. (r) De diver. quæst. lib. ii. p. 4. (s) R. Manaf. Ben. Israel. De resur. mort. (t) Saurin. vol. iv. Dissert. 36. (u) De anima, c. 57.

but

but must have been effected by the sole power and appointment of God, who is the sovereign Lord both of the living ^{A. M. 2388, etc.} and of the dead : And accordingly, we may observe from ^{Ant. Christ. 1116, etc.} the surprise which the woman discovered upon Samuel's ^{from 1 Sam. i. to the end.} sudden appearing, that the power of her magic was not concerned therein, but that it was the effect of some superior hand. The scripture relates the matter thus : (x)

When the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice ; and the woman spake unto Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me, for thou art Saul ? And the King said unto her, be not afraid : What sawest thou ? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. Now, it is plain, from this narration, that the woman saw something she was not accustomed to see. (y) Her necromancy had ordinarily power over demons only, or such wretched spirits as were submitted to the devil's tyranny ; but, on this occasion, she saw an object so august, so terrible, so majestic, so contrary indeed to any thing she had ever raised before, and that coming upon her before she had begun her enchantments, that she could not forbear being frightened, and crying out with a loud voice, as being fully satisfied, that the apparition came from God.

“ But since the Scripture assures us, that God had wholly withdrawn himself from Saul, and would answer him neither by prophets nor by dreams ; how can we imagine, that he should, all on a sudden, become so kind, as to send Samuel to him, or that Samuel should be in any disposition to come, when it was impossible for him to do any good by his coming.” An Objection.

(z) Now there seems to be some analogy between God's dealing with Saul in this particular, and his former treatment of the prophet Balaam. Balaam was for disobeying the orders which God had given him to bless the Israelites ; and was searching into magical secrets for what he could not obtain of God, viz. a power to change into curses the blessings which God pronounced by his mouth. In this case there was but small likelihood, that God would continue to communicate himself to a person so unworthy of any extraordinary revelation ; and yet he did it : But then it was with a design to reveal to him those very miseries, from which his mercenary mind was so desirous to rescue the Midianites. The application is easy : And it farther Answered, by shewing upon what accounts God sent a messenger to Saul.

(x) 1 Sam. xxviii. 12, 13. (y) Calmet's Dissert. sur l'apparition de Samuel. (z) Saurin, vol. iv. dissert. 36.

suggests

A. M. 2888, etc. suggests this reason why God appointed Samuel, at this time, to appear unto Saul, viz. that through him, he might give him a meeting where he least of all expected one; and might shew him, that the fate which his own disobedience had brought upon him, was determined; that there was no reversing the decrees of heaven, no procuring aid against the Almighty's power, no flying (though it were to hell) from his presence, no hiding himself in darkness from his inspection, (a) *with whom darkness is no darkness at all, but the night is as clear as the day, and the darkness and light are both alike.*

And why it was Samuel. (b) That the souls of men departed have a capacity, and, no doubt, an inclination, to be employed in the service of men alive, as having the same nature and affections, and being more sensible of our infirmities, than any pure and abstracted spirits are, can hardly be contested; that, in their absent state, they are embodied with aerial or æthereal vehicles, which they can condense or rarify at pleasure, and so appear or not appear to human sight, is what some of the greatest men, both of the Heathen and Christian religion, have maintained; and that frequent apparitions of this kind have happened since the world began, cannot be denied by any one that is conversant in its history. If therefore the wisdom of God (for reasons already assigned) thought proper to dispatch a messenger to Saul upon this occasion, there may be some account given, why the soul of Samuel (upon the supposition it was left to its option) should rather be desirous to be sent upon that errand: For whatever may be said in diminution of Saul's religious character, it is certain, that he was a brave prince and commander; had lived in strict intimacy with Samuel; professed a great esteem for him in all things; and (c) was by Samuel not a little lamented, when he had fallen from his obedience to God. Upon these considerations we may imagine that the soul of Samuel might have such a kindness for him, as to be ready to appear to him in the depth of his distress, in order to settle in his mind by telling him the upshot of the whole matter, viz. that he should lose the battle, and he and his sons be slain; so that he might give a specimen (as the Jews love to speak in commendation of him) of the bravest valour that was ever achieved by any commander; fight boldly when he was sure to die; and sell his

(a) Psal. cxxxix. 12. (b) Vide Glanville's Sadducismus triumphatus. (c) 1 Sam. xvi. 1.

life at as dear a price as possible ; that so in his death he might be commemorated with honour, and deserve the *Threnodia* which his son-in-law made on him : (d) *The beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places. How are the mighty fallen ! From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle !*

A. M.
2888, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1116, &c.
from 1 Sam.
i. to the end.

CHAP. IV.

From the Death of Saul to that of Absalom. In all thirty-three Years.

THE HISTORY.

DAVID was at Ziklag, when news was brought him of the defeat of the Israelitish army, and of the death of Saul. The messenger was an Amalekite, † who pretended that he was the person who dispatched the king after he found himself mortally wounded ; and (however he

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

(d) 2 Sam. i. 19.

came Upon the death of Saul, David is proclaimed king of Judah, and Ishbosheth has the other tribes.

† By the account which we have of King Saul's death, in the conclusion of the foregoing book, viz. that he fell upon his own sword, and expired, 1 Sam. xxxi. 4. it seems very evident, that the whole story of this Amalekite was a mere fiction of his own inventing, on purpose to ingratiate himself with David, the presumptive successor to the throne : But then the question is, how he came by Saul's crown and bracelet, since it is incongruous to think that he would ever wear them in the time of action, and thereby expose himself as a public mark ? As therefore it is presumed, that they were carried into the field of battle by some of his attendants, in order to put on, in case he had obtained the victory, and returned in triumph ; so the Jews have a conceit, that Doeg, the infamous murderer of the priests at Nob, 1 Sam. xxii. 18.) who at this time was his armour-bearer, had them in his possession, and before he killed himself, gave them to his son, (this young Amalekite), and ordered him to carry them to David, but, to his cost, found that David's reception was quite different to what he expected. For being shortly, to ascend the throne himself, he was willing to have it believed, that to slay the Lord's anointed, upon any account whatever, was in itself an execrable crime, and therefore, to clear himself from the imputation of being any ways accessary to so foul a fact, (as his enemies

A. M. 2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055- &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

came by them) produced Saul's crown and bracelet to verify what he said. He expected, no doubt, an ample compensation for this message and present; but, instead of that, David ordered his guards to fall upon him, because (according to his own declaration) he had been accessory to the king's death.

Upon this conjecture, David, † by God's directions, removed with his family and forces † to Hebron, whither the princes of Judah, in a short time, came to congratulate his return into his native country, and to offer him the crown of their particular tribe; for by this time, Abner, the late king's uncle, and general of his army, who had proclaimed his son Ishbosheth successor to the throne, had taken up his residence at † Mahanaim, on the other side of Jordan, and by his interest and great authority, prevailed with all the other tribes to recognise him.

A battle be-
tween the
two rival
kings.

David however, at the request of the princes of his own tribe, was anointed king of Judah. For two years there

enemies would have been apt to imagine, had he given countenance to this pretended king-killer), he ordered him immediately to be put to death, and therein, at least, acted the part of a good politician, if not of a righteous judge; *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*, on 2 Sam. i.

† Though David, after Saul's demise, had a right to the kingdom by virtue of God's designation; yet as God had nowhere declared, at what time he was to make use of this right, he would not enter into possession, nor take the administration of public affairs upon him, without having first consulted him; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Hebron was situate in the midst of the tribe of Judah; and as it was a very ancient city, the metropolis of the whole tribe, and the possession of those priestly families who espoused David's interest, it was a very commodious city for him to make the place of his residence at this juncture, as being not insensible, that the determination of the metropolis in his favour would be of great weight to influence the whole tribe: And accordingly we find, that he was soon invested with the sovereignty thereof: *For the men of Judah (saith the text) came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah*, 2 Sam. ii. 4.; *The History of the life of King David*, vol. ii.

† This was a place in the tribe of Gad, which had its name from the appearance of an host of angels to Jacob, as he came, with his family and all his substance to Padan-aram, Gen. xxxii. 1. and the reasons for Abner's retreating hither, in the beginning of the new

there were no hostilities on either side ; but not long after this, a war commenced between the two rival princes, in which there were several engagements, but none so remarkable, as that which was occasioned by Abner's sending Joab (who was the general of David's forces) a challenge † to fight twelve men, with an equal number of his, in single combat. The men met, and (to a man) killed one another upon the spot ; whereupon a fierce battle ensued, in which Abner and his men were defeated, and put to flight. In the pursuit, Asahel, a younger brother of Joab's, being very nimble and swift of foot, made after Abner. When he came up with him, Abner, who knew him, desired him to desist, and not pretend to attack him, because he was loth to kill him ; but the young man, ambitious of taking a general prisoner, pressed so hard upon him, that † with a back-stroke of his spear, Abner gave him a wound, whereof he immediately died.

The victorious army, when they came to the place where Asahel's body lay slain, stood still, and ceased their pursuit ; so that Abner had an opportunity to rally his scattered forces, and making a stand upon an advanced ground where he could not well be attacked, founded a parley, and

new king's reign, were, that he might secure the people on that side of the Jordan, and especially the gallant inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, who were great lovers of Saul, and attached to his family ; that he might prevent the Philistines from falling upon the king, whom he had under his protection, in the infancy of this reign ; and chiefly, that he might be at a great distance from David, have the new king more absolutely under his command, and a better opportunity of raising recruits among a people, not only brave and courageous, but very well affected to the cause which he had espoused ; *Calmet's Commentary* ; and *Pool's Annotations*.

† The expression in the text is, *Let the young men now arise, and play before us* : By which Abner seems to have meant, not that they should fall upon, and destroy one another, but merely that they should practise a little their military exercises, or play at sharps, as gladiators anciently at Rome, and now among us, are wont to do, not with any purpose to kill one another, but only to divert the spectators ; *Calmet's Commentary*

† The expression in the text is, — That *with the hinder part of the spear, he smote him under the fifth rib* ; which Virgil, speaking of a mortal wound, has not unhappily imitated :

————— *Haud multa moratus*

Excipit in latus, et, quâ fata celerrima, crudum

Transadigit costas et crates pectoris ens.

VOL. III.

3 A

Æn. xii.

reminded

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
rom 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

Joab kills
Abner very
basely,
which high-
ly displeases
David.

reminded Joab, that they were all brethren, of the same nation, of the same religion, so that if they persisted in hostilities, both armies would have reason to rue it. Whereupon they parted. Abner (who had lost three hundred and sixty men in the engagement) to Mahanaim, on the other side of Jordan, and Joab who (except his brother Asahel) had lost no more than nineteen, to Hebron.

During the course of this civil war, which lasted for some years, David's forces, in most rencounters, had the advantage, and his interest in the nation increased, as that of Ishboeth sensibly declined. Abner indeed, as being both a brave and experienced warrior, and a man of great power and influence in all the tribes, more especially in that of Benjamin, was his main support; but with him he unhappily differed, upon account of Rizpah, one of Saul's concubines, whom Abner had debauched. To have any commerce with the relicts of princes, (of what denomination soever they were) was, in these days, looked upon as an indignity offered to the royal family, and an affectation of the kingdom. For this reason Ishboeth remonstrated the matter to Abner; but Abner, who was an hot man, and impatient of reproof, was so incensed at what he said, that he upbraided him with ingratitude, and threatened not only to † withdraw his own allegiance from him, but,

† What notion the world, at this time, had of marrying any royal relict, is evident from the case of Adonijah, whom Solomon put to death for desiring but to ask for Abishag, one of David's concubines, though he had employed Bath-sheba, the King's mother, to be his intercessor, and was himself his brother, 1 Kings ii. 17. It may be said, perhaps, that Adonijah was at this time aspiring at the throne; which Solomon perceiving, took occasion from this his request, to fall out with him, and prevent it. But however this be a general rule, it was, not among the Jews only, but among other nations, that no private person should presume to marry the king's widow; for this made him appear as a rival and competitor for the crown; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† Abner is an instance of what a strange alteration the study of revenge will work in a man. It was but just lately, that we found him going about the country to confirm the Israelites in their attachment to the house of Saul, and opposition to David; but now, upon a slight disgust, he is not only for deserting himself, but for carrying all the strength of his interest over to the opposite party: For, "such is the genius of many great ministers," (says one), that up-

"ON

but, as far as in him lay, to carry all Israel over to David's interest. And as he threatened, so he did. From that very moment he entered into a private correspondence with David, and not long after, had a public interview with him. At this interview David entertained Abner and his attendants (which were in all but twenty persons) very splendidly; and, in return, Abner assured him, that he would use his utmost endeavours, to prevail with the other tribes to come over to his side. But no sooner was he gone than Joab, returning from an expedition against the Philistines, wherein he had been successful, and taken abundance of spoil, and being soon informed that Abner had been there, and how kindly the king had received him, not only expostulated the matter with the king in high terms, as having entertained a man that came only as a spy upon him, but sent likewise a messenger after Abner, desiring him to return, because the king had something more to communicate to him; and so, having way-laid him, under pretence of saluting him, he stabbed him to the heart, * out of jealousy partly, and partly in revenge of the blood of his brother Amasa.

David was extremely displeased at this cruel and inhospitable action; but his affairs were in so unsettled a state, and Joab, at that time, had so much credit with the army, that he could not call him to an account for what he

“ on slight occasions, they are irritated, and do rather rule over kings, than are ruled by them; *Patrick's Commentary*.”

* Abner was a man longer versed in military affairs than himself, who, in the time of Saul's distraction, had been regent of the nation, and, since the time that he had set up Ishbosheth to be king, prime minister: And therefore Joab had reason to suspect, that in case he once got into David's favour, (as the service he was able to do him, gave him a title to it), it would not be long before he would gain a superior ascendant; and therefore he took this wicked method to prevent him. For (to use the reflection which Josephus makes upon this occasion) “ What will not men dare to do, who are covetous, ambitious, and will be inferior to none? They press forward to the end, without ever considering the means, and will commit a thousand crimes in pursuit of what they desire. Nor are they less bold in maintaining, than they were in acquiring their places and preferments by evil practices; insomuch that, rather than suffer the disgrace of losing what they have unjustly gotten, they will plunge themselves still deeper and deeper in wickedness, to retain it;” *Jewish Antiq. lib. 7. c. 1.*

A. M.
2029, etc.
Ant. C. rift.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
1. to xix.

A. M. 2949, etc. Ant. Christ. 3055, etc. from 2 Sam. i. to xix. had done: And therefore contented himself with declaring publickly † his detestation of it, and with making a magnificent funeral for Abner, wherein he himself followed the corpse as chief mourner.

David indeed had reason to lament the death of Abner, which, in all probability, had defeated the measures that were concerted for the union of the two kingdoms, had not the sudden and untimely death of Ishbosheth paved the way for it afresh. Ishbosheth, upon the loss of Abner, began to despair of his affairs, grew negligent of himself, and fell under the contempt of his subjects; so that Rechab and Baanah, † two Benjamites, that were of

† And good reason he had to express his detestation of so foul a fact. For besides that Abner was himself a man of great power and authority, and at this time the head of the contrary party, it carried an air of suspicion, that David might have some concern in the murder; especially since Joab, his first minister, and general of his forces, was the wicked instrument of it. Abner had been reconciled to David indeed; but this made the matter still worse, and added the breach of faith and hospitality to the sin of murder, which was enough to alienate the minds of the Israelites from him for ever: And therefore Josephus gives us this account of David's behaviour upon so critical an occasion, not only to testify his abhorrence of so base a practice, but to purge himself likewise, upon the strictest niceties of faith and honour, that he had been true to Abner. "The moment he heard of Abner's death, he stretched out his right hand towards heaven in an appeal and protestation, that he was neither privy, nor consenting to the fact, and cursed most bitterly the assassin, (whoever he was), his family; and accomplices. He appointed, by proclamation, a public mourning for him, with all the solemnities of tearing garments, and putting on sackcloth &c. Himself, with his great ministers and officers, assisted at the funeral, and gave sufficient demonstration, by wringing their hands, bearing their breasts, and other expressions of sorrow, both of the veneration they had for Abner's memory, and the sense they had of so inestimable a loss; so that, in the conclusion, all the people were perfectly satisfied that David was far either from approving or consenting to so execrable a deed;" *Jewish Antiq. lib. 7. c. 1.*; and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

† This is added, to shew us, that these two regicides were not only officers in the king's army, but of the same tribe with Saul, and therefore had more ties than one upon them, to be honest and faithful to his family. For there is reason to believe, that Saul, who lived in the borders of Benjamin, conferred

more

of his household, came upon him, as he was asleep in the heat of the day, and having cut off his head, † carried it as a present to David at Hebron; but instead of the reward which they expected, he * rebuked them severely, and ordered their hands and feet to be cut off, and themselves hung up in a public place, for the terrour of all regicides; but the head of Ishbosheth was honourably interred in Abner's tomb.

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Chriſt.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

When

more favours upon that tribe than any other, and might therefore justly expect, both to him and his, a greater esteem and fidelity from those of his own tribe, than from others. This *patronimic* is therefore very properly prefixed to the names of *Rechab* and *Baanah*, to shew what vile ungrateful villains they were, and how justly they deserved the severe and exemplary punishment which David inflicted on them, *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

† It may seem a little strange, that these two ruffians were not discouraged by David's punishing the Amalekite for killing of Saul, and by the detestation he had publicly shewn of Joab's baseness in murdering Abner: but the former of these cases, they might think, was not parallel to theirs; because Saul was anointed king by God's immediate direction, whereas Ishbosheth, having never had such sacred unction, was no more than an usurper; and as for the latter, they might think that David's conduct, in relation to Abner's death, proceeded from art and policy, rather than any serious dislike of the thing itself; and in this opinion they might the rather be confirmed, when they saw Joab, instead of being punished continuing in the very same post and power that he had before; *Pool's Annotations*.

* The manner in which Josephus makes David express himself, upon this occasion, is to this effect: — “ Wicked wretch-
“ est that you are! prepare yourselves immediately to receive the
“ just reward of your villainy. Do not you know, that I requited
“ the murder of Saul, when he, who had taken away that sacred
“ life, had the confidence to bring me his golden crown, for an
“ ostentation of the service he had done me in it? And yet it was
“ at the instance of Saul that he did it, and to prevent the indig-
“ nity of his being taken alive by his enemies. And am not I the
“ same man now that I was then? Or do you think that I am
“ turned so abandoned a wretch since, as to countenance the
“ most profligate of men and actions, or to account myself under
“ any obligation to you, for dipping your hands (upon my ac-
“ count, as you would have it thought) in the blood of your
“ Lord: For cutting the throat of a person (and in his bed too)
“ so just, that he never did any man wrong, and so generous a
“ patron and benefactor to your ungrateful selves, that all the
“ advantages

A. M. When Ishbosheth was dead, all the tribes of Israel sent their deputies to David, acknowledging his title, and promising him their allegiance, upon condition that he would reign righteously † over them; so that now he was anointed king over all the tribes, after that he had reigned at Hebron over that of Judah only for the space of seven years and six months.

He takes Jerusalem, and enlarges it. Being thus invested with full regal power, and having a multitude of brave ‡ and gallant soldiers to attend him, he

“ advantages you can pretend to in this world, are but what
 “ you stand indebted for to his bounty and goodness? You shall
 “ therefore now be sure to pay, both for your breach of faith to
 “ your master, and the scandal you have cast upon me. For
 “ what greater wound can any man give me in my reputation,
 “ than to expose me for a person that can take pleasure in the
 “ tidings, or give countenance to the committing of so barbarous
 “ an assassination?” *Jewish Antiq. lib. vii. c. 2.* Which speech of David’s has a good deal of the spirit of Alexander the Great in it, whose exacting of punishment of Bessus for his murder of Darius, drew from the historian this reflection: *Reputabat enim, non tam hostem suum fuisse Darium, quam amicum ejus, a quo esset occisus;* Justin. lib. xii. c. 6.

† This was David’s part of the covenant, which the elders of Israel suggested to him in a very elegant metaphor, which here occurs the first time, though afterwards it is frequently used in sacred writ, especially in the prophets, as well as some profane authors. The expression is, — *Thou shalt feed my people Israel*; which was the rather made use of, to put David in mind, that he was created a king, not so much for the advancement of his own honour and interest, as for the good of the community which he was to rule with all tenderness, and watch over with all diligence. The very manner of the expression implies, that kings ought to have the same care for their people, as the shepherd has over his flock; and that as the shepherd is not the owner of the sheep he keeps, so should no king look upon his subjects as his own *peculium*, but as a flock committed to him by the only true Lord of all mankind, and to whom he must give an account of his administration “ For this is the greatest grace of a king, “ that he certainly believes himself to be made a king by God “ for the sake of the people; and let him often call to mind, “ that the people were not created, or ordained, by God for the “ king,” says Conradus Pelicanus upon these words; *Patrick’s Commentary*, and *Pool’s Annotations*.

‡ In this account of David’s worthies, which are mentioned both in the second book of Samuel, and the first of Chronicles, there

he made his first expedition against Jerusalem, to dispossess the Jebusites of the fort of Zion, which commanded the city, and was thought so impregnable, that when he summoned the besieged to surrender, they, in derision, replied that the meanest of them all ([†] their blind and lame) were able to defend it against all he could do. This incensed David to such a degree, that he caused proclamation to be made through the camp, that whoever first took the fort should be made captain-general of all his forces; whereupon Joab, who was a bold pushing man, undertook to storm it, and carried it sword in hand. After this, David for the reception of his guards and domestics, enlarged the buildings of the place, and made

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

there is a great difference of names; and the reason is, because the catalogue in Chronicles was made in the beginning of David's reign, that in Samuel, at the latter end: and so the former mentions those men who had helped David to his settlement in the kingdom, whereas the latter takes notice of those who had stuck to him all the time of his reign, and died in his service; *Bedford's Scripture Chronology, lib. v. c. 5.*

† The blind and the lame, says Luther upon this place, were the idols of the Jebusites, which, to irritate David, they set upon their walls, as their patrons and protectors; these they call *blind and lame sarcastically*, and with respect to David's opinion: as if they had said, "These gods of ours, whom ye Israelites reproach, as blind and lame, and so unable to direct or defend us, will secure us against you, and to your cost, make you find, that they are neither blind nor lame, but have eyes to watch for us, and hands to fight against you, so that you must conquer and subdue them, before you take this place." But this interpretation seems to be a little too metaphorical and forced, for which reason we have rather chosen that construction Josephus (lib. vii. c. 2.) puts upon this passage, viz that they imagined their fortress to be so impregnable, that by way of contempt, they told David, their very blind and lame would be able to defend it against him and all his forces; and this is a sense so extremely plain and obvious, that the renowned Bochart wonders, why any man of learning should seek for any other. The only exception to it is, that these blind and lame (which were objects of compassion) are said to have been extremely hated by David. But we may observe, that David here retorts the sarcasm upon them; *The lame and blind, i. e.* those who are said to defend the place, and who, as they pretended, were to be only the lame and the blind. And these were hateful to David, because they had wickedly and insolently defied the armies of the living God; *Pool's Annotations; Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

A. M. it his royal palace ; while Joab repaired and beautified the
 2949, &c. old city Jebus, or Jerusalem, for the more commodious ha-
 Anti. Christ. bitation of his subjects.

1055, &c. † Hiram, who had lately made himself king of Tyre
 from 2 Sam. i. to xix. and Sidon, hearing how prosperous David was in all his af-
 Subdues the fairs, sent an embassy to congratulate his accession to the
 Philistine throne, and withal a present of cedar trees, with carpenters
 princes ; and other artificers to assist him in his buildings. But the
 Philistine princes had other notions of David's growing
 greatness, which they took for a sure presage of their own
 downfall ; and therefore, to put a stop to it as soon as pos-
 sible, they raised one great army, which (as they approach-
 ed to Jerusalem) he defeated ; and the next year, when
 they came † with a much larger, God manifestly interpo-
 sed in his favour. For instead of advancing directly upon
 them, he ordered him to take a compass round by a wood
 of mulberry-trees, which would cover and conceal his
 march, and when he heard a sound, or rushing in the
 trees, (which would affrighten the Philistines), then to
 fall upon them ; which he accordingly did, and gave them
 so total a defeat, that, for many years after, they never
 pretended to give Israel any more disturbance.

and brings This time of rest, and public security, David thought
 home the a proper season, wherein to bring home the ark of
 ark to Jeru- God (which for almost fifty years had continued in the
 salem, but
 is not al-
 lowed to
 build a tem-
 ple.

† Abibalus was his primitive name, but before he entered
 into a league of amity with David, he changed it to Hiram,
 that so it might be the standing name of him and his successors,
 as Pharaoh, and after that Ptolemy in Egypt, Abimelech
 among the Philistines, and Cæsar among the Roman emperors.
 The name in their language signifies, *he lives that is exalted* ; or,
let him live who is exalted, i. e. *let the king live for ever* ; and his
 sending to David only under this name, is the true reason why
 no other name is mentioned in Scripture ; *Bedford's Scripture-
 chronology, lib. v. c. 4.*

† It cannot well be supposed, that the Philistines out of their
 small territories could produce such vast numbers of men as they
 brought against the Israelites ; and therefore the remark which
 Josephus makes, helps to explain this matter, *viz. that Syria and
 Phœnicia, as well as several other warlike nations, were engaged in
 this confederacy* : but this cannot be meant of Hiram, who was
 in a league of the strictest amity with David, but of such Phœ-
 nicians only as would not submit to him, and therefore joined
 with the Philistines, first to subdue his ally, and then to subdue
 him before his government could be settled ; *Bedford's Scrip-
 ture-chronology ; lib. v. c. 4.*

house

house of Abinadab) into a place which he had prepared for it in his own city. To this purpose, attended with the † principal men of the nation, and the chief officers of his court, together with a strong guard for the convoy of the ark, in case any enemy should attempt to surprize them, he came to Kirjath-jearim : But, either through inadvertency, or neglect of the (a) divine law, which obliged them to carry it upon men's shoulders, they, in imitation of the Philistines, put it in a cart, and when the cart had like to have been overturned, Uzzah, who was one of its drivers, taking hold of the ark to prevent its falling, was immediately struck dead upon the spot ; so that David, terrified at this judgment, durst not at that time carry it into Jerusalem, but left it near the city, in the house of Obed-Edom, a Levite, whom God blessed with a large increase of all his substance, for the little time that it continued with him. In the space of three months, the king, recollecting that none were to carry the ark but the Levites, though they themselves were expressly forbidden (b) to touch it, he adventured to remove it from Obed-Edom's, which he did in great form and solemnity. The Levites, who were to bear the ark on their shoulders, he caused to be sanctified ; himself cloathed in a linen ephod, and † dancing before it, brought it into a convenient place, which he had prepared for

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
to xix.

† It is supposed by some, that this bringing back of the ark was appointed to be one of the three great festivals ; and the reason why David might summon so many of his principal ministers and officers to accompany him in the expedition, might be, to possess the young people, who perhaps had heard little or nothing of the ark, by reason of its having been absent so long, with a mighty veneration for it, when they saw the king, and so many of the chief nobility waiting on it, with such a variety of music, and such public declarations of joy ; *Miller's history of the church.*

(a) Numb. iv. 15. (b) Numb. iv. 15. and xviii. 3.

† Strabo tells us, that it was customary among the Greeks, as well as other nations, to use music and dancing in the processions before their gods, lib. 10. Callimachus mentions the chori, and dancings of the youth at the altar of Apollo ; Plato observes, that, among the Egyptians, all kinds of music, songs, and dances, were consecrated to their gods ; *De legibus, lib. 3.* And even Lucian (*De saltatione*) expressly says, that among the ancients, no ceremonial of religion, no expiation, no atonement was accounted rightly accomplished without

A. M. 2949, etc. for it; offered a great quantity of * sacrifices upon this occasion; and, with the rest of the company that attended this solemnity, feasted and rejoiced.

An. Chrif. 1055. &c.
from 2 Sam. i. to xix.

† His wife Michal, who was Saul's daughter, and proud

dancing. So that David was far from being singular in his behaviour upon this occasion; nor was his behaviour in this particular any disparagement to his regal dignity. His dancing, *i. e.* his moving in certain serious and solemn measures, suited to music of the same character and tendency, was an exercise highly conducive to the purposes of piety, and mixing with the public festivities of his people, was a condescension (as Tacitus relates of Augustus the Roman emperor) not unbecoming the greatest Monarch. Policy taught Augustus to put himself upon a level with his subjects in the public rejoicings; piety taught David, that all men are upon a level in the solemnities of religion. So that David was not singular in his behaviour upon this occasion; *Patrick's Com. and The history of the life of King David*, vol. ii.

* The words in the text are, — *And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings*, 2 Sam. vi. 13. From which words some would infer, that David, having measured the ground between Obed-Edom's house, and the place he had built for the reception of the ark, had altars raised at the distance of every six paces, whereon he caused sacrifices to be offered, as the ark passed by. But it is easy to imagine, what a world of confusion this would create in the procession; and therefore the more rational construction is, that after those who carried the ark had advanced six paces, without any such token of divine wrath as Uzza had undergone, then did they offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God, which might consist of several living creatures, all sacrificed and offered up at once. But, even supposing, that, at set distances, there were sacrifices all along the way that they went; yet we are to know, that it was no unusual thing for Heathens to confer on their gods, nay, even upon their emperors, the same honours that we find David here bestowing upon the ark of the God of Israel. For in this manner (as Suetonius tells us) was Otho received. *cum per omne iter, dextra sinistraque, oppidatim victimæ caderentur*: And the like he relates of Caligula: *Ut a Miseno movit, inter altaria et victimas, ardentisque tædas, densissimo obviorum agmine incescit*; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† After that David was by Saul banished from court, and forced to seek for shelter in foreign countries, Saul, to cast the more contempt upon him, gave his wife away to one Phalti, (or Phaltiel), son of Laish of Gallim; but David, when he came to the crown of Judah, had her restored to him again; for which purpose he sent messengers to Ishbosheth, who then reigned over the eleven tribes at Mahanaim, to demand her, and

proud perhaps on account of her pedigree, † upbraided him upon this occasion with his humility, as a diminution of his regal dignity; but he, in reply to the sarcastic manner wherein she spake it, only told her, "That what he had done was in honour of that God, who had chosen him to govern Israel rather than any of her family; and that such condescensions as these would never bring him under any just contempt."

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

By this time the palace, which Hiram king of Tyre had furnished David with men and materials to build, was finished; and, as he was reflecting upon the meanness of

and who, according to that demand, took her from Phaltiel, and sent her back to David. The Hebrews pretend that Phaltiel never came near Michal, who, in strictness, could not be his wife, because she had never been divorced by David; but others believe, that she had five sons by Phaltiel, which were given up to the Gibeonites to be executed, 2 Sam. xxi. 8, 9. But in this place, there seems to be an error crept into the text, which should be read *Merob* instead of *Michal*; *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Michal*.

† The words of Michal, wherein she upbraids David, are these:—*How glorious was the King of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day, in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!* 2 Sam. vi. 20. At first reading, they seem to intimate, that David, in his dancing, had exposed his naked body, and acted some way or other immodestly: But these words, we are to consider, were spoken in a fit of passion, and when Michal was minded to aggravate matters; for it is not to be doubted, but that David kept himself within the bounds of modesty, how joyous soever he might be. It was a command which God gave the Israelites, that they should rejoice in their feasts, Deut. xii. 7.; but then, their joy was not to be lascivious or petulant, but pious and moderate. In the case before us, David was in the more immediate presence of God, and about a very sacred business; and therefore it is incongruous to think, that he would commit any thing immodest: And, that he could not expose his nakedness (as his wife would insinuate) is evident from his having not only an ephod on, but being clothed with a robe of fine linen, besides his usual under garments, 1 Chron. xv. 27.; and therefore, though his putting off his regal robes might give some occasion to Michal's expression of his *uncovering himself*, yet it must be owned, that this opprobrious term proceeded from nothing but the overflowing spleen of a proud passionate woman; *Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

A. M. 2949; &c. Ant. Christ. 1055, &c. from 2 Sam. i. to xix. God's habitation in comparifon of his own, it came into his mind to build a noble fabric for his religious worfhip, which defign he communicated to † Nathan. Nathan at firft approved of it; but the night following, he was commanded to forbid it, with this affurance, that God accepted of his fincere intentions; promifed that his fon fhould fucceed him, and build him a temple; and that his pofterity fhould reign † for many generations.

His victories abroad; David was a man of war, and therefore, fince God had refufed him the privilege of building him a temple, and had referved that work for his fon Solomon (whole name denotes *peaceable*) to execute, he thought himfelf bound to fubdue all his enemies on every fide, that when his fon came to undertake that great affair, he might meet with as little moleftation as poffible.

In the beginning of his reign, the Philiftines had twice invaded him, and therefore he began with them. Their royal city of Gath, which was called *Metheg-Ammah*, or the *Bridge of Ammah*, (becaufe it flood upon a hill of that name, and was a bridle to curb the tribe of Judah, and keep them in obedience) he took and made it a barrier againft themfelves. The Moabites he utterly fubdued; and, ha-

† At what time this prophet began to appear in Ifrael, we are no where informed. This is the firft time that the Scripture makes mention of him. He was a man of great temper, prudence, and fine addrefs, who knew how to mitigate the rigour of his reproofs with a great deal of fweetnefs and wifdom, which qualified him fo well for the converfation of kings, and other great perfons: He was always equally efteemed and beloved by David, and in his conduct towards him, maintained a juft medium between an inflexible austeriety and a fervile flattery; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† The words in the text are, — *I will eftablifh the throne of his kingdom for ever*; which, in their primary fenfe, do relate to the terreftrial kingdom of David's family, and the long duration of it, enough to juftify the expreffion *for ever*, taken in a lefs ftrict fignification: But if we take it in a more fublime and abfolute fenfe, it can belong to none but that fon of David, to whom God the Father gave an eternal kingdom (properly fo called) over all things both in heaven and earth, which, though it was not fo well known in the times when this prophecy was uttered, was, by the event afterwards, made plain and evident; *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

ving dismantled all their strong places, he † slew the greater part of them, reserving such only as were requisite to till the ground. From hence he marched his army to secure his territories, which bordered upon the Euphrates. The Syrians of Zobah, under the command of † Hadadezer, came with a strong force, and gave him battle: but he soon routed them, and, besides a great number of foot-prisoners, took a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen that attended them; but, reserving to himself no

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

† There is no small obscurity in the words of the text, which are these:—*He smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even in two lines measured he to put to death, and with one line to keep alive*: Which words seem to allude to a custom among the kings of the east, when they were thoroughly incensed against any nation, viz. to make the captives all come together in one place, and prostrate themselves upon the ground; that, being divided into two parts, as it were with a line, their conqueror might appoint which part he pleased either for death or life, which was sometimes determined by casting of lots. Some are of opinion, that David made three lots or parts of these Moabites, two of which he ordered to be slain, and one part only to be kept alive. The reason of this severity against these miserable people, the Rabbins assure us, was, because they had slain his parents and brethren, whom he had committed to the custody of the king of Moab during his exile. But of the reality of this motive there is no manner of appearance; and since this execution which David inflicted may relate either to the whole nation, or the army only, to clear David from the imputation of too much cruelty, we should rather conceive it of the third, or half part at most, of the army. *Le Clerc's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

† In the fragment of Nicholas Damascenus, which Josephus has preserved, this prince is simply called *Adad*, which was the common name of the kings of Syria, who, according to the manner of other eastern princes, took their titles from the celestial bodies, and, in their language, *Adad* signifies *the sun*. The fragment, recorded by Josephus, is to this effect:—“A long time after, one Adad, a valiant man, and a native of the place, had the command of Damascus and Syria, Phœnicia only excepted. There happened to be a war between the same Adad and David the king of the Jews, and several encounters between them; but, in the end, Adad was overcome at Euphrates, behaving himself with the resolution of a brave prince and a great captain.” The same author, speaking further of his posterity, says,—“That the government was handed down from father to son to the tenth generation, and that the successor still received the father's name with the empire, as the Ptolemies did among the Egyptians;” *Jewish Antiq. lib. vii. c. 6.*

more

A. M. 2949, etc. Ant. Christ. 1055, &c. from 2 Sam. i. to xix. more horses than were necessary for an hundred chariots, the rest he ham-stringed, to make them unserviceable for war. † the Syrians of Damascus, hearing of Hadadezer's ill success, came to his assistance : But David put them to the rout likewise, and having slain two and twenty thousand of them, he became master of their country ; put garrisons into their fortified cities, and made them tributary ; and (what was another victory in this expedition) in his return from Syria, he engaged a great body of Edomites † in the valley of salt, slew eighteen thousand of them, and brought them under the like subjection.

Thus loaded with honour and spoils, David returned from this campaign ; but all the rich materials that he had compiled together, viz. gold, silver, and brass, he dedicated to the Lord, or laid them up for the future use of the temple : And (what was no small addition to his store) Toi, the king of Hamah, hearing of his victories, sent his own son to congratulate him thereupon, and, in a large present of vessels of gold, and vessels of silver, &c. to acknowledge his kindness in breaking the power of his most inveterate enemies.

and chief
ministers at
home.

All the while that David was thus engaged in foreign wars, he took care to have justice administered to his subjects at home, and a certain number of very great

† Aram Damascus, which we translate *Syria of Damascus*, was that part of Syria which lay between Libanus and Antilibanus, whose chief city was Damascus, situate in a valley called by several names in Scripture, and watered by five rivers, the two principal of which, viz. Abana and Paraphar (mentioned in 2 Kings v. 12.) descended from mount Hermon ; whereof the latter washed the walls of Damascus, and the other ran through it, and divided the city into two parts ; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The valley of salt here is thought by many to be the place adjoining to the dead sea : But, as the country of the Edomites, whom David subdued in his return from his expedition into Syria, must necessarily lie towards the east of Canaan, we must look for some other valley of salt in the confines of that country. Now, about a league southward from the city of Palmyra, or Thadmor, in the road to Edom, we find a large plain abounding with salt-pits, whence a part of Syria is furnished with that commodity ; and therefore it is very probable, that the battle between David's generals and the Edomites was fought in this plain ; which is about two days journey from Bozrah, the capital city of the eastern Edom, whence the people might march out to meet David's forces, and oppose them in their return home ; *Calmet's Commentary*.

mer

men employed in the highest offices of trust. Joab (as we said before) was captain-general; Jehoshaphat † chancellor of the kingdom; Abiathar was high-priest; Seraiah, secretary of state; Benaniah, † captain of his guard; and his own sons, the prime ministers of his household, such as Lord Chamberlain, Lord Treasurer, Lord Steward, as we call them; and to these he added one more, Mephibosheth,

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

† The word, in our translation, is *recorder*, which, in the marginal note, is *remembrancer*, or *writer of chronicles*; an employment of no mean estimation in the eastern world, where it was customary with kings to keep daily registers of all the transactions of their reigns, and a trust, which whoever discharged to purpose, must be let into the true springs and secrets of action, and consequently must be received into the inmost confidence. For whether the office of a Lord Chancellor was consistent with the constitution of the Jewish state, a modern author seems to doubt; *History of the life of King David. vol. ii.*

† These guards are called in the text *the Cherethites, and the Pelethites*; but who they were, is variously conjectured. That they were soldiers, is evident, from their being mentioned as present at the proclamation of King Solomon against Adonijah, which could not conveniently have been done without some armed force, to protect the persons who proclaimed him; and that they were not common soldiers, but the constant guards of David's person, is manifest from the title of *Σωματοφύλακες, keepers of the body*, which Josephus gives them. Some are of opinion, that they were men of a gigantic stature; but we find no ground for that, though they were doubtless proper and robust men, (as we speak), and of known fidelity to their prince, 2 Sam. xv. 18. and xx. 7. Others again think, that they were Philistines; but it is hardly supposable, that David would have any of these hated uncircumcised people to be his body-guard; neither can we believe, that the Israelitish soldiers would have taken it patiently, to see foreigners of that nation put in such places of honour and trust. Cherite, however, is certainly but another name for Philistine, as appears from Zephaniah ii. 5.; and therefore the question is, how came any of David's subjects to be called after that name? And the answer to this is obvious.—They were so called, because they went at first with him into Philistia, and continued there with him all the time that he was under the protection of Achish. These were the persons who accompanied him from the beginning, in his utmost distress, and came to him in all calamities; and therefore it is no wonder, if men of such approved fidelity were made choice of for his body-guards; nor is it any uncommon thing in history, for legions, or bands of soldiers, to take their names, not from the place of their nativity, but their residence, and very frequently from the name of their captain or commander.

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

boseth, the son of Jonathan, to whom he restored all his grandfather Saul's estate; and though he was a cripple, † and lame of both his feet, yet (for the love he had for his father) he entertained him with great kindness, and ordered him to sit with his own sons at the royal table every day.

His subdu-
ing the Am-
monites and
their confe-
derates.

David, not long after this, hearing that his † old friend Nahash was dead, sent his compliments of condolence to his son and successor Hanun; but the great men that were about the young king, made him believe, that the sole intent of David's sending this embassy was to spy out the weakness of the city, and in what place it might most advantageously be assaulted: So that the too-credulous prince ordered the ambassadors to be treated in the most ignominious manner, and with * their beards half-shaved, and their cloaths cut short, even to the middle of their buttocks, to be sent about their business.

The

commander. Since therefore, in 1 Chron. xii. 3. we find mention made of one Pelet, the son of Azmaveth, who resorted to David while he was at Ziklag, but still under the protection of Achish, it is but supposing him to be their captain, and then we come to the reason why they were called Pelethites, unless we suppose them rather denominated from Peleth son of Jonathan, who was of the king's own tribe; *Patrick's Commentary*; *Pool's Annotations*; and *The History of the life of King David*.

† Mephiboseth was very young when his father Jonathan was killed at the battle of Gilboa, which put his nurse into so great a consternation, that she let the child fall, as she was making haste to escape with him, and from that time he was lame of both feet ever after, 2 Sam. iv. 4.

† What the particular benefits which David had received from Nahash were, we are no where told in Scripture; but some of the Jews say, that he fled to him, when he durst stay no longer with Achish King of the Philistines, and that he received him very kindly; others, that he entertained his relations, when the king of Moab, to whom he had committed them, slew some of them: But the most likely opinion is, that as he was a bitter enemy to Saul, who had given him a great overthrow, he, for that very reason, became a friend to David, when he perceived how Saul persecuted him, and thereupon might send him relief and assistance, and perhaps offer him protection in his kingdom; *Patrick's Commentary*.

* This was one of the greatest indignities that the malice of man could invent, in those countries where all people thought their hair so great an ornament, that some would have rather submitted

The ambassadors being ashamed to return home, were ordered to continue at Jericho, until their beards grew again; but as for the indignity put upon them, David gave them assurance that he would resent it in a proper manner. Accordingly he sent an army under the command of Joab, to call these unhospitable Ammonites to an account. The Ammonites were apprised of his design, and therefore provided against the worst, by procuring three and thirty thousand mercenaries of the Syrians, who lay incamped at some distance in the fields, whilst their own forces covered the city.

Upon this situation of the enemy, Joab divided his army into two bodies, one of which he gave to his brother Abishai, to keep the Ammonites in play, while himself, with the other, which consisted of his choice men, attacked the Syrians. Their agreement was to relieve each other, in case there was occasion: But Joab, at the first onset, charged the Syrians so home, that as they were but mercenaries, and thought not the cause their own, they soon

to die than part with it. What a foul disgrace and heavy punishment this was accounted in ancient times, we may learn from Nicholas Damascenus, as mentioned by Stobæus, (tit. 42.) who says, that among the Indians, the king commanded the greatest offenders to be shaven, as the heaviest punishment that he could inflict upon them; and to the like purpose Plutarch (in Agesil.) says, that whenever a foldier, among the Lacedæmonians, was convicted of cowardice, he was obliged to go with one part of his upper lip shaved, and the other not. Nay, even at this day, no greater indignity can be offered to a man of Persia, than to cause his beard to be shaved; and therefore Tavernier, in his travels, relates the story, that when the Sophi caused an ambassador of Aurengzebe's to be used in this manner, telling him, that he was not worthy to wear a beard, the Emperor (even in the manner as David here did) most highly resented the affront that was done to him in the person of his ambassador. And as shaving David's ambassadors was deservedly accounted a grievous affront, so the cutting off half the beard (which made them look still more ridiculous), was a great addition to it, where beards were held in great veneration; and where long habits down to the heels were worn (especially by persons of distinction) without any breeches or drawers, the cutting their garments, even to the middle, thereby to expose their nakedness, was such a brutal and shameless insult, as would badly become a man of David's martial spirit, and just sentiments of honour, to have tamely passed by; *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

A. M. 2949, &c. Ant. Christ. 1055, &c. from 2 Sam. i. to xix. gave way, which made the Ammonites, who depended much upon their courage, endeavour to secure themselves by retreating into their city; for the season of the year being too far advanced, made it impracticable for Joab to besiege it.

Hadadezer had assisted the Ammonites with some forces the last campaign; and being apprehensive that David would fall foul upon him, he resolved to be beforehand with him. To this purpose levying a vast army, not only in Syria, but in Mesopotamia likewise, he sent it, under the command of Shobach his general, over the river Euphrates, as far as Helam, a town in the borders of the half-tribe of Mannasseh. This David had soon intelligence of, and therefore uniting all his forces, he marched with the utmost expedition, and coming upon the enemy sooner than was expected, slew seven thousand men, who attended seven hundred chariots; which so disheartened the rest, that he soon dispatched forty thousand more, together with their general, who fell in the action, and died upon the spot. Upon this success, several petty kings, who had assisted Hadadezer in this expedition, fearing some worse consequences, made a peace with David, and became tributary to him; and even Hadadezer himself, being thus forsaken by his confederates, gave him assurance that he would no longer espouse the cause of the Ammonites, but leave them to shift for themselves: Whereupon David sent Joab against them with a powerful army, who laid the country waste, destroyed all that came in his way, and (to make short of the matter) laid siege to their royal city of Rabbah.

His falling in love with Bathsheba, and murdering her husband Uriah.

While Joab was carrying on the siege of Rabbah, David continued in Jerusalem, and walking one evening † on the top of his palace to take the fresh air, he chanced to * espy a beauteous woman bathing herself in her garden.

† The manner of building, in all eastern countries, was to have their houses flat-roofed, with a terrass, and parapet wall, for the convenience of walking in the cool air; and as David's palace was built on one of the highest places of mount Sion, he might easily look down upon the lower parts of the town, and take a view of all the gardens that were within a due distance; *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

* Thus Jupiter is said to have seen Proserpina washing herself and exposing her whole body to his view, which inflamed his lust after her:

Δοκίμης ὅλον εἶδος ἐξέρετο Περσεφονείης

But

den. The unguarded king, as soon as he saw her, was smitten; and inquiring who she was, was informed that she was Bathsheba, the daughter of Ammiel, and wife of Uriah † the Hittite, an officer in his army, who was then with Joab at the siege of Rabbah. David sent for her, lay with her, and dismissed her: But, in a short time, finding herself with child, she apprised him of it, and desired him withal to consult her honour and safety in devising some means to conceal it. Hereupon he sent a dispatch to Joab for Uriah to come to him, as if he had something particular to enquire of him; but his whole intent was to give him an opportunity of lying with his wife, that so the child, when it was born, might be reputed his. Uriah came; and after the king had asked him some few questions concerning the condition of the army, and the advances of the siege, he ordered him to go home, † and refresh himself after his journey, and sent an handsome collation

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

But whether it was in her garden, or court-yard, overlooked by the palace, or in some apartment in her house, whose windows opened that way, that this woman bathed herself, is not so certain. Tradition points out the place of a fountain still called after her name, which would make it probable that she bathed in a garden, did not Josephus expressly declare, that it was in her own house, as indeed the natural modesty and decency of her sex, as well as the circumstance of the time, (for then it was evening), make his account more probable; nor can it be doubted, but that the declining rays of the sun, shooting into the inmost recesses of her chamber, and throwing a great lustre around her, might discover her very clearly to very distant eyes, without the least suspicion on her part, of any possibility of being seen, and consequently with all the reserve of modesty proper to her sex; *The history of the life of King David, vol 3.*

† Uriah, though an Hittite by nation, was proselyted to the Jewish religion, and so marrying with a Jewish woman, lived in Jerusalem; or as he was one of the king's life-guard, which for reasons above mentioned, seem to have been all natives, and of the tribe of Judah, this additional name might perhaps be given him, for some gallant action achieved against the Hittites, in the same manner as a Roman, in after-ages, came to be called Africanus, Germanicus, Parthicus, &c. upon account of victories obtained over the Africans, Germans, or Parthians; *Calmet's Comment.*

† The words in the text are, ——— *Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet,* 2 Sam. xi. 8.; for in these countries, where it was

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

collation after him for his entertainment : But so it was, that instead of going near his wife, he chose to sleep in the guard-room.

David was informed of this the next morning; and was therefore resolved to make use of another expedient. He invited him to sup at his own table, and prevailed with him to drink to such a pitch, that he did not doubt but that the heat of the liquor would have inflamed his appetite, and made him go home to his wife; but still he lay in the guard-room, and, in excuse to the king, said, that he thought it was his duty so to do, while the rest of the soldiers were incamped: So that, finding himself still disappointed, the king ordered him at last back to the army, and * sent him with letters to Joab, wherein he commanded

not the custom to wear shoes, but sandals only, and, in some places to go barefoot, washing the feet was a great refreshment after a journey, and a common compliment that the master of the house usually made to any stranger at his first entrance. But this custom of washing the feet, was not only after a journey, to cleanse them from dirt and dust, but very much used likewise before people sat down to meet; and therefore David's meaning in the expression is, that Uriah should go down and feast with his wife, (for which reason he sent a collation to his house), and after so long an absence, indulge himself in her company. For David's intention hitherto was, neither to murder Uriah, nor marry his wife, but only to screen her honour, and his own crime; *Calmet's Commentary.*

* It may be thought perhaps, that Uriah suspected something of his wife's adultery, and therefore, resolving that it should be discovered, would not be persuaded to go down to his house: But if he did, he certainly acted the part of a trusty servant, when he would not open the king's letter to know what was in it, though, upon supposition that he suspected his criminal commerce with his wife, he had reason to expect no good. This puts one naturally in mind of the story of Bellerophon's carrying letters from Prætus to his father-in-law Jobatès, King of Lycia, with an order to kill him; from whom it came into a proverb, to carry Bellerophon's letters, or a death-warrant against one's self, according to that passage in Plautus:

Aha! Bellerophonem jam tuus me fecit filius,

Egomet tabellæ detuli ut vincirer.

Bacchid.

For the fable of Uriah and Bellerophon are so very much alike, that the fable of the latter seems to be founded upon the story of the former. Bellerophon, who as some scholiasts think, should be read Boulepheron (a council-carrier) was a stranger at the court of Prætus, as Uriah (being an Hittite) was at the court of David. He

declined

commanded him to manage matters so, that Uriah might be killed by the Ammonites, which accordingly came to pass: For in an assault upon the town, Uriah, being deserted by the other soldiers, who had private orders to retire, when the onset began, * fell immediately by the enemies sword.

A. M.
2649. &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

As soon as Uriah was dead, Joab sent an express thereof to the king, who returned him orders to carry on the siege with more vigour, until he had made himself master of it; and then to rase it even to the ground, and to put all the inhabitants to the sword, without sparing so much as one man. Upon this order, Joab advanced his approaches, and renewed his assaults every day, until he

His taking
of Rabbah,
and cruelly
using it.

declined the embraces of Sthenobæa, as Uriah did the bed of Bathsheba; and was, for that reason, sent to Jobates, general of Præ-tius's army, with letters, which contained a direction to put him to death, as Uriah was sent to Joab, David's general. By Jobates he was sent, with a small guard, upon an attack, in which it was intended he should be slain, as Uriah was by Joab to that in which he fell. The main of the history is the same in both; the similitude of Jobates and Joab's name is very remarkable; and the variation in the whole only lies in some such ornamental embellishments, as might well be expected in a poetical composition; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *The history of the life of King David*.

* The fate and fall of the gallant Uriah is thus related by Josephus — "Joab put Uriah upon a desperate forlorn, and to cover his design, give him several brave men to back him, with a promise to support him with the whole army, in case there was any possibly of entering the town; and at the same time recommended it earnestly to him, to maintain the reputation he had already acquired with the king and the army, by acquitting himself gallantly upon this occasion. Uriah, with great cheerfulness, undertook the post, while Joab gave his companions private orders to withdraw, and leave him, as soon as they found themselves in danger. The Hebrews pressed hard upon the wall, and put the Ammonites under a dreadful apprehension, that they would force the town; whereupon the besieged threw open their gates, and made a desperate sally, which was as good as a signal to those that were with Uriah, to abandon him; which accordingly they did, and left him to be cut to pieces. He did all the execution that was possible to be done by one single man against numbers, and after several wounds received, fell like a man of honour, with his face to the enemy." *Jewish Antiq. lib. 7. c. 7.*

A. M. had got possession of * the water-works which supplied the
 2949, &c. town; and then sent a courier to acquaint the king, that
 Ant. Christ. the city was reduced to the utmost extremity; was in no
 1055, etc. condition to hold out much longer, and therefore he de-
 from 2 Sam. i. to xix. fired him to come in person, that he might have the ho-
 nour of taking it. The King, according to his general's
 desire, went with a strong reinforcement, took the place
 by storm, gave the plunder of it to his soldiers, but re-
 served to himself what belonged to the king, among which
 was the crown, of inestimable value. Having thus wasted
 the city, and divided the spoil, he put the men who had
 held it out against him, to the most exquisite torments;
 and other places that would not immediately surrender, he
 treated with the same severity.

Upon the death of Uriah, his wife * Bathsheba pre-
 tended to mourn for him; but it was not long before Da-
 vid sent for her, † and declared her his wife: And in this
 state

Nathan re-
 proves him,
 and threat-
 ens God's
 punish-
 ments upon
 him for his
 sins, which
 accordingly
 were exe-
 cuted,

* Some learned men are of opinion, that this royal city of Rab-
 bah was likewise called *the city of waters*, either because it stood up-
 on a river, or was encompassed with water both for its defence and
 delight. But Junius renders it, that *he cut off the waters which sup-
 plied the town*; which translation not only Josephus seems to favour,
 by telling us, that Joab seized on all the aqueducts which led into
 the city; but Polybius (lib. v.) likewise, speaking of the siege of
 this same place by Antiochus, relates the story, how a certain de-
 ferter discovered to that prince a subterraneous passage through
 which the besieged came to draw water, which Antiochus stopped
 up, and by reason of their thirst, compelled them to surrender;
Pool's Annotations; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

* How long widows were to mourn for their husbands, there is
 no express precept in the law; but the usual time for common
 mourners was no more than seven days; and we cannot suppose
 that Bathsheba was much longer, considering the reason we have to
 apply to her the words of Lucan;

———Lacrymas non sponte cadentes

Effudit, gemitusque expressit pectore læto.

† According to the Jewish doctors, it was utterly unlawful
 for any to marry another man's wife, in case he had defiled her
 before. The canonical law declares such marriages null and
 void, as are contracted between an adulterous man, and a wo-
 man that was partner with him in the crime; and though the
 law of Moses does not expressly forbid them, yet we may not
 thence infer, that they were permitted among the Jews. For
 these reasons some have thought, that this marriage of David
 and

state he continued without any molestation, or apprehension of having done wrong, for the space of several months, till at length God sent † Nathan the prophet to rouse him out of his adulterous lethargy, and, by * an elegant parable,

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
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and Bathsheba was null and invalid; but others, upon better grounds, have supposed, that though there were many criminal circumstances attending it, yet these did not vacate its effect, and, in short, though it ought not to have been done, yet, being done, the marriage was good, and the children, which were afterwards born, were legitimate; *Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries.*

† We learn little more of this great man in the sacred writings, but that he was David's prophet, intimate counsellor, and historiographer. Josephus says of him, that he was a polite and a prudent man, one who knew how to temper the severity of wisdom with sweetness of manners. And Grotius compares him to Manlius Lepidus, of whom Tacitus says, that he had a talent of turning away Tiberius's mind from those cruel purposes, to which the vile flattery of others inclined him, and was, at the same time, in equal favour and authority with him. Nathan certainly knew the art of reproving kings with authority, and yet without giving offence. So far from that, he grew in his prince's favour and estimation, as long as he lived; inasmuch, that David (as tradition tells us) called one son after his name, and committed another (even his beloved Solomon) to his care and tuition; *The History of the life of King David, vol. iii.*

* There is a passage of Seneca, (Epist. 59.) where he treats of the style fit for philosophic writing, which suits so well with this parable of Nathan's, that I chuse to give it in his own words, as a fit preamble to the short comment which follows of it. *Invenio, inquit, imagines, quibus si quis nobis uti vetat, et poetis, illas solis judicat esse confessas, neminem mihi videtur ex antiquis legisse, apud quos nondum captabatur plausibilis oratio. Illi, qui simpliciter, et demonstrandæ rei causa loquebantur, parabolis referti sunt, quas eximio necessarias, non ex eadem causa, quâ poetis, sed ut imbecilitatis nostræ adminicula sint, et ut dissentem et audientem in rem præsentem adducant:* For parables, like histories, wherein we have no concern, are heard with more attention, and are so contrived, as to give no offence, even though they provoke the man to whom they are dressed, to condemn himself. *There were two men in one city, the one rich, and the other poor: And the rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; as David had many wives and concubines, with whom he might have been well satisfied, without violating another man's bed; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up.* Bathsheba, very likely, was the only wife that Uriah had, with whom he was highly pleased

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
From 2 Sam.
1. to xix.

nable, to represent the baseness and wickedness of what he had done, and to make him pronounce sentence against his guilty self.

David accordingly condemns himself, and confesses his guilt, and humbly begs pardon for what he had done : Whereupon Nathan was sent again to inform him, that †
God

pleased and delighted, and she very probably with him, till David's temptations had perverted her mind. *And it grew up together with him and with his children; it did eat of his own meat and drink of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.* Nathan in his resemblance, cannot be said to have surpassed the truth; considering how fond many persons were anciently, not only of lambs, but of several other creatures, which they suffered to eat with them at their tables, and lie with them in their beds; and that even at this day it is a custom in Arabia, (which is contiguous to Judea) to have one of the finest lambs in the flock brought up in the house, and fed with the children. *And there came a traveller to the rich man:* This denotes David's straggling appetite, which he suffered to wander from his own home, and to covet another man's wife: And of this appetite the Jewish doctors have this observation, that "in the beginning it is but a traveller, but in time it becomes a guest, and in conclusion is the master of the house." *And he spared to take of his own flock, and his own herds,* wherewith he might have satisfied his appetite, *but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the wayfaring man that was come to him.* Most commentators here take notice, that Nathan did not go so far in the parable, as to say any thing of the rich man's killing the poor man. This certainly would have made the resemblance more complete, but it is therefore omitted that David might not so readily apprehend Nathan's meaning, and so be induced unawares to pronounce a sentence of condemnation upon himself; whereupon the prophet had a fair opportunity to shew him, that, if the rich man, who took away the poor man's lamb, deserved death, according to his own judgment, how much more did he deserve it, who had not only taken another man's wife, but caused him to be slain likewise by the enemies of Israel; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† It may very well be asked, how God so readily came to forgive David, when he acknowledged his transgression, and yet did not forgive Saul, though he made the like confession, *I have sinned.* But the answer is obvious, that, be the form of expression what it will, unless it proceeds from the sincerity of the heart, the great searcher of hearts will not regard it. The true reason, therefore, why Saul could not obtain a revocation of his sentence of rejection, was, because his repentance was not sincere;

God had pardoned his transgression, viz. the eternal punishment due to his transgression God had remitted, but the * temporal should be inflicted on him : 'That therefore

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1035, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

cere; it did not proceed from an humble and contrite spirit. At the same time that he acknowledged his sin, he desired Samuel *to honour him before the people*, and persisted in his disobedience ever after : Whereas David, on the contrary, humbled himself, wept and lamented for his sin, and of his penitence has left us a perpetual and eternal monument in Psalm li. *Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great goodness; according to the multitude of thy mercies, do away mine offences : Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin, &c.*

* In the threats, which God orders Nathan to denounce against David, the expressions are, — *I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of the sun; for thou didst it secretly : but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun ;* 2 Sam. xii. 11, 12. Where the words, *I will raise up, I will take, I will do*, do not denote any positive actions of God, as if he prompted wicked men to do the same things, wherewith he threatens David, insomuch that, without such prompting, they would not have done them, but by it were necessitated to do them : Such a construction as this is injurious to the divine attributes, and makes God the author of evil. But the true meaning is, — That God, at that time, saw the perverse disposition of one of his sons, and the crafty wiliness of one of his counsellors, which, without restraining them, would not fail to create David no small uneasiness : And therefore, because David had violated his law, and, to gratify his lust, had committed both adultery and murder, God would not interpose, but suffered the tempers of these two wicked persons to follow their own course, and have their natural swing ; whereupon the one, being ambitious of a crown, endeavours to depose his father, and the other, willing to make the breach irreparable, advised the most detested thing he could think of. This indeed was the very thing that God had foretold, but, without any imputation upon his attributes, we may say, that God can so dispose and guide a train of circumstances, that the wickedness of any action shall happen in this manner rather than another, though he do not infuse into any man the will to do wickedly : *Torrenti nequitie, ut sic loquar*, (for I give you the commentator's own words, because there is something very accurate in them), *nullas vires addit, sed impedit, ne hac potius quam illac, perumpat ; circumstantiasque omnes (quæ nihil vitii in se habent) ita dirigit, et moderatur, ut certum quendam eventum consequantur. Sunt autem innumera ejusmodi circumstantia, quibus nihil*

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
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fore the son (for by this time Bathsheba was brought to bed of a son) begotten in this adulterous congress, should not live; that several of his family should come to an untimely death; that some one of his sons should rise up in rebellion against him; and his own wives be defiled publicly, and in the sight of all the world, because he had given such scandal to his own people, and † such occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme.

Nor was it long before part of this sentence began to be executed upon him: For the child, which he had by Bathsheba, was taken sick and died. While it was sick *, David fasted and prayed, if possibly he might appease the divine

ineſt mali, et quibus tamen res, pro Dei arbitrio, variantur; Deoque ſunt non pauciores viæ, quibus omnia reget, ſine ulla virtutum ſuarum imminutione, et ita ut libertatem interea peccandi aut parendi hominibus relinquat. So that from ſuch ſcripture-phraſes as theſe, we may not infer, that God either does, or can do, evil, but only, that he permits that evil to be done, which he foreknew would be done, but might have prevented had he pleaſed; or, in other terms, that he ſuffers men, naturally wicked, to follow the bent of their tempers, without any interpoſition of his providence to reſtrain them; *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

† David's crime, which at firſt was ſecret, was in time diſcovered, and the report of it carried to the neighbouring nations. The Syrians, the Ammonites the Moabites, the Edomites, the Philiftines, people whom he had ſubdued, and who, out of pure malice, had always a jealous eye upon his conduct, would not fail upon this occaſion to murmur, and ſay, "How could God thus favour an adulterer and murderer? Where is his juſtice and his providence? Is this the God who is ſaid to be ſo equitable in his dealings with men, and ſo ſevere an avenger of iniquity, and yet makes choice of ſuch a monſter as this to govern his people! This is the David, *the man after God's own heart*, whom he preferred before Saul, on whom he hath poured down innumerable bleſſings, and for whom he hath many rich promiſes in reſerve; and yet did Saul ever commit ſuch horrid enormities as this man has done, and ſtill continues to be the favourite of God?" Such reflections (we may reaſonably imagine) would David's tranſgreſſions have occaſioned among ſtrangers and enemies, who might thence be induced to deſpiſe a religion they were acquainted with, and which he, who ſhould have been its main ſupport, ſo little regarded; *Calmet's Commentary.*

* David's acts of humiliation for his ſins are thus deſcribed by Sylvian, (*De gubern. Dei.*), "He put off his purple, threw
" away

divine wrath, and intercede for its life; but when it was dead, he acknowledged the justice of God, and, cheerfully submitting to his will, made his ardent supplications to him, that the remainder of his afflictions might be mixed with mercy. This in some measure was done; for, in a proper space of time, he had another son † by Bathsheba, who was named † Solomon, in confidence of the promise

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.
Solomon is
born.

“away his royal ornaments, laid down his diadem, wholly stripped himself of his kingship, and appeared as a penitent, in a squallid, rueful garb, fasting, lying on the ground, confessing, mourning, repenting, deprecating, &c. and yet, with all his humiliation and compunction, he could not obtain a revocation of this punishment.” But why should the death of this child, who, had he lived, would have been a perpetual monument of guilt, and a brand of infamy upon his parents, be accounted by David so great a punishment? The true way to account for this, is to ascribe it to David’s excess of passion for Bathsheba, which so strongly attached him to every offspring of her’s, and made him forget every thing in this child but that motive of endearment. Besides this, there is something in human nature, which prompts us to rate things after a manner seemingly unaccountable; and to estimate them, not according to their real worth, but according to the expence or trouble, or even the distress they cost us. Nor should it be forgot, that this excessive mourning did not proceed simply from the fear of the loss of the child, but from a deep sense of his sin, and of the divine displeasure manifested in the child’s sickness, and particularly from a just apprehension of the injury which he had done the infant by his sin, and which he thought himself bound in justice, by prayer and intercession, as much as he was able, to repair; *Patrick’s Commentary*, and *Pool’s Annotations*.

† It is very observable, that in the whole compass of this story, there is not a word said either of Bathsheba’s guilt or punishment; but this might be, because, as to the matter of her husband’s death, she was innocent; to the adultery which she committed, she was inticed by the offers of a powerful king; and in the calamities which befel him, she, no doubt, had her share, and felt her punishment; *Patrick’s Commentary*.

† The word *Solomon* is properly derived from *Schalom*, which signifies *peace*, intimating, that his reign should be peaceable; but, by God’s appointment, Nathan gave him another name, viz. *Jedidiah*, i. e. *the Beloved of God*. The Scripture, however, never calls him by this name, but only by that of *Solomon*; for what reason we cannot tell, unless we may suppose, that the people, being long harrassed in war during his father’s reign, might be pleased with this name, and use it rather than the other, to intimate their hopes and longing desire of peace.

A. M. 2949, etc. Ant. Chris. 1055, etc. from 2 Sam. i. to xix. Amnon ravishes his sister Tamar.

promise which God had made, that his reign should be crowned with peace: But this did not hinder the divine justice from being true to its threats, as well as it promises. David had several sons, but only one daughter, that we read of, whose name was Tamar, (sister to Absalom, by Maacha, the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur †) a princess of excellent beauty, and with whom Ammon, his eldest son by another queen, fell desperately in love, and pined away with an † hopeless desire of obtaining her; till at length, by the advice and contrivance of Jonadab, his

And for this reason (among others) it may be inferred, that Solomon was born after the conclusion of the Ammonitish war, though the sacred history takes occasion, from the death of Bathsheba's first-born, to relate that event first. Not long after this, David had another son by Bathsheba, (2 Sam. v. 14.) and 1 Chron. iii. 5.) whom he called *Nathan*, after the name of the prophet; and of these two Christ was born, though in different lines: For Joseph, his supposed father, came from Solomon, as Matthew (chap. i. ver. 6, 7.) relates it; and Mary, his real mother, came from Nathan, as it is in St. Luke, chap. iii. ver. 34.; *Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Bedford's Scripture-chronology*, lib. v. c. 4.

† The borders of the Geshurites and Maacathites (as we read, Josh. xiii. 11, 13.) were given by Moses to the Israelites that seated themselves on the east of Jordan; nevertheless *the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites and Maacathites, but they dwelt among the Israelites unto this day*: From whence it is evident, that the cities of Geshur and Maacha, the two capitals of two small kingdoms, lay within the borders of the land of Israel: and though it does not appear how they were situate in respect of each other, yet it is certain that they both lay on the south side of Mount Libanus, in the north part of the half tribe of Manasseh, and on the east side of the river Jordan; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii.

† Virgins of the blood-royal were kept secluse in apartments separate from the commerce of men, into which not only strangers, but even their own fathers were not permitted to enter. Amnon, however, at some time or other, had seen the beautiful Tamar, or otherwise he could not have conceived so strong a passion for her. Upon some certain ceremonial occasions indeed, it was customary for the young women to walk out and show themselves; but, considering their close confinement at other times, it was hardly possible for Amnon to find an opportunity of declaring his passion, much more of gratifying it; and therefore, out of pure despair, he pined himself into a consumption; *Calmet's Commentary*.

intimate

intimate friend, and † cousin-german, he found means to decoy her into his apartment, where, † notwithstanding all her intreaties and expostulations with him, he first ravished her, and when his brutish passion was satisfied, in a sudden

A. M.
2649, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
1. to xix.

† Jonadab was the son of Shimeah, the brother of David.

† There is something so moving, and the arguments are so strong in Tamar's speech to Amnon, that one would almost wonder why it did not prevail with him to desist. *Nay, my brother, do not force me.* Here she reminds him of his relation to her, for which she hoped he would have such a reverence as not to meddle with her, though she herself were willing, much less to offer violence to her, which it was abominable to do even to a stranger, much more to one of the same blood. *For no such thing ought to be done in Israel.* Whatever other nations did, who had the knowledge of God's laws, she begs of him to consider, that they both belonged to a nation which was God's peculiar people, had been instructed better, and therefore should act otherwise. *Do not thou this folly.* She prays him (besides the scandal it would give) to reflect with himself on the heinousness of the crime, and how highly offensive it would be to the divine Majesty. *And I, whether shall I cause my shame to go?* She beseeches him (besides the sin against God) to consider the disgrace it would be to her, who, after such a foul act, must be ashamed to look any one in the face. *And as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel.* Lastly, She puts him in mind of his own reputation, which so vile an action would tarnish for ever, and make him be looked upon as a man void of all sense, religion, honour, and humanity. *Now therefore I pray thee, speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.* It is a common opinion among the Jewish doctors, that in the war which King David had with the King of Geshur, he took Maacha his daughter captive, and (as they fancy their law allows, Deut. xxi. 11.) lay with her for once only, and then begat this daughter; but that, upon her becoming a proselyte to the Jewish religion, he married her, and afterwards had Absalom. Tamar therefore being born while her mother was a Gentile, they suppose that she was not David's legal child, and that Amnon consequently might marry her: But all this is mere talk, without any shadow of proof. The most probable opinion is, that she was neither ignorant of the law (Levit. xviii. 11.) which prohibited such incestuous marriages, nor thought her father's power so great, as that he might dispense with the law upon this occasion, but merely that she said any thing which she thought would please him, to stop his solicitations, and rude attempts, and, to escape for the present out of his hands; *Patrick's Commentary, and Jewish Antiquities, lib. vii. c. 8.*

humour

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

For which
he is mur-
dered by
her brother
Absalom.

humour † bid her be gone; and when she remonstrated the ill usage, had her turned out by main force.

* In this mournful and distracted condition, Tamar, repairs to her brother Absalom, and tells him the whole transaction of her rape: but her brother, though naturally a man of an high spirit, advised her to be silent in point of prudence, because her ravisher was heir apparent to the crown; and himself so † artfully concealed his own resentment,

† Interpreters seem to be at a great loss to find out the reason, why Amnon's love to his sister should so soon be converted into such an hatred, as to make him act so rudely, so brutally towards her; but it is no uncommon thing for men of violent and irregular passions, to pass from one extreme to another. The shame, which accompanies every base action, the remorse and repentance, and many bad consequences, that immediately pursue it, make a recoil in every man's temper; and therefore it is no wonder, that a libidinous young man, who would not spare so much as his own sister, should, after fruition, and when the ardour of his lust was satisfied, be seized with a contrary passion, and hate the object he loved so much before, when he came coolly to compare the pleasure and the sin together, the shortness of the one, and the heinousness of the other. He hated his sister, when he should have hated himself; and as this outrageous treatment of her, made it impossible for his guilt to be concealed, so God seems to have abandoned him to the tumult of his intemperate mind, on purpose to make this punishment of David's adultery more flagrant, and the prophet's prediction of *raising up evil to him out of his own house*, 2 Sam. xii. 11. more conspicuous; *Calmet's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*, and *The History of the life of King David*.

* The manner of Tamar's signifying her vexation for the injury and disgrace which her brother had put upon her, is expressed by her putting ashes upon her head, 2 Sam. xiii. 19. And that this was an ancient custom, whereby to denote one's grief and concern for any great loss or calamity, is evident from that passage of the prophet concerning the people of Tyre: *They shall cry bitterly, cast dirt upon their heads, and wallow themselves in the ashes*, Ezek. xxvii. 30.; from Achilles's behaviour upon the death of Patroclus, as we have it in Homer,

Ἀμφοτέρῃσι δὲ χερσὶν ἑλὼν κόνιν ἀμβαλοῦσσαν

Χέναιο κακκῆφαλῆς, χάριεν δ' ὅσυχυνε πρόσωπον. Iliad. 18.

and from what Mezentius did upon the death of his Lausus, according to Virgil:

Canitiem immundo deformat pulvere, et ambas

Ad cœlum tendit palmas. Æneid. 10.

† By this means Amnon was lulled asleep into a belief that Absalom would not trouble him for what he had done, because he did

repentment, that every one believed he had taken no notice of it. But about two years after, under the pretence of a sheep-shearing entertainment, (which in those countries used to be attended with great mirth and jollity), he invited his friends and relations, and with the king's consent, (tho' himself declined going) all the princes of the blood, and more especially his brother Amnon, to his country-seat at Hazor; where, while they were engaged in feasting and drinking, his servants, by his direction, and through the promise of an impunity, fell upon Amnon, (as Absalom gave the signal), and immediately dispatched him. This put the rest of the princes into such a consternation, that they made the best of their way from the house, as expecting the like fate; and the king, when he heard the first news of the thing, (supposing that Absalom had killed all the rest of his brothers), was thrown into the utmost grief and despair, till, by the information of Jonadab, (who seems to have been privy to the design), and the safe arrival of the other princes, he was certified that Amnon only was dead; but his death alone was matter of sorrow and lamentation enough.

Absalom, who knew very well how highly his father would resent this treacherous and barbarous murder, † fled to his mother's relations, and was entertained

did not threaten, nor so much as expostulate with him, or take any notice of what had passed, though, in reason, he ought to have been more afraid that he was meditating a terrible revenge: According to the lesson which the mouse gave her young one, when she perceived her affrighted at the noise of the crowing cock, but regardless of the fly approaches of the cat, viz. "That there was no danger to be feared from the "fluttering cock, but from the silent cat, present death;"

Patrick's Commentary.

† In the case of wilful murder, the law is, *That the avenger of blood shall slay the murderer; when he meeteth him he shall slay him*, Numb. xxxv. 21. From whence it seems to follow, that it was not in any man's power to protect the wilful murderer, because the avenger of blood, i.e. the nearest relation of the person murdered, might with impunity, wherever he met him, kill him. As Absalom therefore had committed a designed murder, his own life was every moment in danger; and, as there were no cities of refuge in his own country, that in this case would yield him protection, he was forced to fly out of the kingdom to his mother's father; *Patrick's Commentary.*

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

Who there-
upon is ban-
ished, but
afterwards
restored to
his father's
favour.

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

by his grandfather Talmai, at Geshur, for three years. But length of time having worn out David's grief, and Joab perceiving that he had a secret desire to see Absalom again, (if he could but find out an handsome excuse for such a purpose), procured a good artful woman † from Tekoah, who, † in a speech, which he had contrived for her, was

† Tekoah was a city in the tribe of Judah, which lay south of Jerusalem, and about twelve miles distant from it. And herein does Joab's cunning appear not a little, that he made choice of a woman rather than a man, because women can more easily express their passions, and sooner gain pity in their miseries; a widow, which was a condition of life proper to move compassion; a grave woman, (as Josephus calls her), which made her better fitted for addressing the king; and a woman not known at Jerusalem, but living at some distance in the country, that the case, which she was to represent, might not be too readily inquired into; *Pool's Annotations.*

† The art and contrivance of this widow of Tekoah's speech is very remarkable. *When the woman of Tekoah spake to the King, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O King! And the King said to her, What aileth thee? And she said, I am indeed a widow woman, and my husband is dead, and thy handmaid had two sons, and the two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him; and behold, this family is risen against thine handmaid, and they say, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him for the life of his brother, whom he slew, and we will destroy the heir also: And so they shall quench my coal that is left, (i. e. deprive me of the little comfort of my life which remains, and is, as it were, a coal buried in the ashes), and leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth, 2 Sam. xiv. 4 &c.* Now, the scope of all this speech was to frame a case as like to David's as she could devise, that, by prevailing with him to determine it in her favour, he might be convinced, how much more reasonable it was to preserve Absalom. But, how plausible soever the likeness might be, there was a wide difference between her case and his: For her son (as she pretended) was slain in a scuffle with his brother; whereas Amnon was taken off by a premeditated murder: He was slain in the field, where there were no witnesses, whether the fact was wilfully done or no; whereas all the king's sons saw Amnon barbarously murdered by his brother: And, lastly, he was her only son, by whom alone she could hope to have her husband's name perpetuated; whereas David's family was in no danger of being extinct, even altho' he had given up Absalom to justice. But there was a deal of policy in not making the similitude too close and visible, lest the king should

was to convince the king, that in some cases the life of a murderer might be saved. The woman Joab introduced; and when she had told her tale, so as to induce the king to a compliance with her feigned petition, she gave him at length to know, that the case she had been stating was Absalom's; and that if, in a private man, the king was disposed to be merciful, there was much more reason for his pardoning his own son, whose absence the people lamented, and for whom they had so general an affection.

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

The king, being apprised that Joab had put the woman upon this artifice, ordered him to recal Absalom, but † confined him to live in his own house; and, as yet, would not seem so far reconciled to him, as to admit him into his presence. But at the end of two years, Absalom prevailed with Joab to intercede further for a full pardon, and to introduce him to the king, who, upon his humbling himself, and begging pardon, took him up from the ground, where he lay prostrate, and gave him a kiss, as a token of his forgiveness and royal favour.

Absalom was certainly one of the most comely persons in all Israel, without the least blemish from top to toe, and with an head of hair (which in those days was thought a great beauty) prodigiously long and thick, so that his person drew every one's eye to him. as soon as he was restored to favour at court. But as Amnon, his eldest brother, was slain, and Chileah, his second, by this

His beauty,
popularity,
and rebel-
lion against
his father.

should perceive the drift of the woman's petition, before she had obtained a grant of pardon for her son, and came to make the application to the king: And though, upon her making the application, the king might have argued the disparity of the two cases, yet he thought proper to wave this, and admit her reasoning to be good, because he was as desirous to have Absalom recalled as were any of his subjects; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† This small severity to Absalom, small in comparison of the heinousness of his crime, David might think necessary, not only to put him upon a sincere humiliation and repentance for what he had done, when he found that the king (indulgent as he was) had not fully pardoned him, but to convince the people likewise, how detestable his crime was in the king's esteem, and how averse he would be to pass by the like in another person, who could not endure the sight of a son, whose hand was defiled with a brother's blood; *Patrick's Commentary.*

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i to xix.

time, dead, he began to look upon himself as presumptive heir to the crown, and thereupon to affect a state and equipage greater than usual. He provided himself with chariots and horses, and had a guard of fifty men to attend his person: But, notwithstanding this, he would be * so obsequious and humble, as to stoop to the meanest people, that had any thing to say to him; would offer his service, to solicit every one's cause, that had any business at court; and, upon proper occasions, not fail to instil into the people's minds a bad opinion of the present administration, as if the public affairs were neglected, but that, if he were at the helm, things should be conducted at an other-wise rate.

† By these arts and insinuations, which were advantageously seconded by the comeliness of his person, (as we said), and the familiarity of his address, he gained to himself the affections of the people, and insensibly alienated them from David. ‡ When therefore he imagined that matters

* It is an observation of Plato, that when any one intends to make himself a tyrant in a popular state, he no sooner enters on the government, but προσγέλῃ τέ τε ἀσπάζεται τὰς πάντας, ὃς ἂν περιτυγχάνει, *he smiles upon, and kindly salutes all sorts of people, wherever he meets them*; avowing, that he hates tyranny, promising great things, both in private and public, καὶ πᾶσιν ἰσχυρὰ τε καὶ πατρῷος εἶναι προσποιῖται, and making as if he would be mild, and gentle, and fatherly to all; even as Tacitus relates of Otho, that *protendens manum, adorare vulgum, jacere oscula, et omnia se cunctis pro dominatione*: That he used to kiss and shake hands with any one, court and adore the mob, and do every little servile thing, to get possession of the government; *Plato de Repub. l. 8. and Tacit. Hist. lib. i.*

† It is an observation of Aristotle, in his *Politics*, (l. v. c. 4.) that all changes and revolutions in government are made by one of these two ways, ὅτε μὲν διὰ βίας, ὅτε δὲ δι' ἀπάτης, *either by force and violence; or else by deceit and craft*: Nor ever was there a man better formed by nature to manage matters in this latter way, than was Absalom, who was a person of courage and gallantry, of civility and courtesy, young and wonderfully beautiful, descended from kings, both by father's and mother's side, and prodigal enough of large and magnificent promises, if ever he came to be king; a character not unlike that of Turnus in Virgil:

Hunc decus egregium formæ movet, atque juventæ,

Hunc atavi reges, hunc claris dextera facis. *Æneid. lib. vii.*

‡ This is said in the text to have been *after forty years*, 2 Sam. xv. 7.; but where to date the beginning of the forty years has

matters were ripe for his purpose, he desired leave of his father to go to Hebron, pretending that he had vowed a vow in his exile, that, whenever it should please God to bring him back to Jerusalem, he would offer in that place a solemn sacrifice of thanksgiving. The king, little suspecting his hidden design, and being desirous that all religious services should be punctually performed, gave him free leave to go, and wished him a good journey. Hebron was the place of his own nativity, and where the royal seat had been, in the beginning of David's reign; and therefore he thought it the properest for his wicked

A. M.
2949, etc.
A. M. Christ.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
1. to xix.

has occasioned much disagreement among commentators. Some compute them from the time that the Israelites demanded a king of Samuel; others, from the first time that David was anointed king; others, from the first commencement of his reign over Judah; and others again, from the time that he took possession of the whole kingdom. The two latter of these opinions are insupportable, because David did reign but forty years in all, and was now so hail and hearty, as to be able to walk on foot; whereas, in the latter end of his life he was very infirm and bed-ridden. The learned Usher indeed makes these forty years to commence from the time of David's first unction; and therefore he was threescore years old when this rebellion broke out, and lived ten years after it: But (with all due deference to so great authority) both this, and the other opinion that computes from the time that the demand of a king was made, are forced and unnatural; have no affinity to the text, nor do they suggest any reason why the sacred historian should begin his account of this unnatural rebellion with an *And it came to pass, that after forty years*: Whereas, if we consider the account of what went before, how Absalom, by all the arts of popularity, a splendid equipage, condescending behaviour, large promises, and flattering speeches, had alienated the hearts of the people from his father, we cannot but be tempted to think that there is an error crept into the text, that instead of *Arbaim, forty*, as our copies have it, the word should be *Arba, four only, i. e. four years* after that Absalom was re-established in Jerusalem, and had used all his alluring arts to gain the nation's affections, the first step that he took, was to go to Hebron. This makes the sense easy and entire, and is confirmed by the authority of the Syriac and Arabic versions, the judgment of several able critics, and the testimony of Josephus himself, whose words are; *μετὰ δὲ τὴν τῷ πατρὶ παρ' αὐτῶν τισσάραν τοῖς ἡδὲ τοῖς βασιλευσίν* that *four years after his father was reconciled him*, this conspiracy broke out; *Calmet's Commentary*; *Howel's History, in the notes*; and *Josephus's Jewish Antiq. lib. vii. c. 8.*

A. M.
2949, &c
Ant. Chris
3055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
1. to xix.

The king
leaves Jeru-
salem, and,
in his re-
treat, meets
with various
kinds of
usage.

enterprise: And no sooner was he settled there, but he sent his emissaries about to sound the inclinations of the several tribes, and to exhort those whom they should gain over to his party, to be ready to take up arms † as soon as they should hear that he was proclaimed king.

This occasioned a general insurrection. Absalom was the nation's darling; and, upon this summons, † people

† The expression in the text is, *as soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet*, 2 Sam. xv. 10. which looks as if Absalom had planted trumpeters at proper distances to take the sound from one another, and disperse it over all the kingdom, that so they, who were lovers of his cause, might instantly resort to his assistance and support; to which they were encouraged, no doubt, by the suggestions of his emissaries, who might persuade the people, that all this was done by the king's consent and approbation, who, being aged and infirm himself, was willing to resign his kingdom to his eldest and most noble son, who was descended from a king by both parents; *Le Clerc's Commentary*, and *Pool's Annotations*.

† It would really make one wonder, how any people could so easily abandon a prince, so brave, so happy, and successful as David had been; how they could forget his excellent qualities, or be unmindful of the services he had done the nation; but for this there may be some reasons assigned. In every nation there are always some turbulent and discontented spirits, who are uneasy with the present state of things, and promise themselves some benefit from a change. Saul's party was not as yet entirely extinct, and Joab, who was David's prime minister, behaved with an insufferable pride, and insolence. His crimes, which were very black, and which the king durst not punish, redounded upon him; and the king himself had given his enemies umbrage enough against him, in living with Bathsheba, after he had murdered her husband: But, what gave the fairest pretence of all, was the obstruction of justice in the civil administration: For had there not been something of this, Absalom could have had no grounds for making such loud complaints. These were some of the causes of so general a revolt in the people: And yet, after all, there might be something in what Abarbinel imagines, *viz.* that neither Absalom, or the elders of Israel, nor the rest of the people who were misled by them, had any intention to divest David of his crown and dignity, much less to take away his life; but only to substitute Absalom, as coadjutor to him, for the execution of the royal authority, during his lifetime, and to be his successor after his death. For, as it would have been monstrously wicked in Absalom to have designed the destruction of so kind a father, so it is hard to conceive how he could have gained to his party

ple flocked to him from every part : So that David, who had intelligence of all this, thought it not safe for him to continue any longer in Jerusalem †, but leaving the place, with a design to retire beyond Jordan, he was attended by his guards, his best troops, and principal friends. Zadok and Abiathar the priests, understanding that the king was departed from Jerusalem, brought the ark of the covenant to accompany him in his distress; but † he desired

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

party such a multitude of abettors in so villainous an enterprise. This however we may observe, that David looked upon their proceedings (2 Sam. xv. 14. and xvi. 11. as an attempt upon his life; and that (whatever their first intentions were) they came at last to a resolution to have him killed, to make way for their own better security : Which may be sufficient warning to all men, never to begin any thing that is wrong, for fear that it should lead them to the commission of that, which they at first abhorred, when they find they cannot be safe in one wickedness without perpetrating a greater; *Calmet's and Patrick's Commentaries.*

† Though the fort of Sion was very strong and impregnable, yet there are several reasons which might induce David to quit Jerusalem. He had not laid in provisions for a long siege, nor was Jerusalem, in every part of it, defensible; and if Absalom had once taken it, as it was the capital, he would soon have been master of the whole kingdom. There was some reason to suspect likewise, that the inhabitants were faulty, and so much addicted to the contrary party, that had he stood a siege, and been reduced to straits, they might possibly deliver him up to Absalom. Nor was the preservation of the city itself, which David had beautified, and adorned with a fine and stately palace, and where God had appointed to put his name and worship, the least part of his concern; and therefore he thought it more conducive to his interest in all respects, rather than be cooped up in a place which he desired to preserve from being the seat of war, to march abroad into the country, where he might probably raise a considerable army, both for his own defence, and the suppression of the rebels; *Pool's Annotations.*

† This he might do for several reasons; for either he might think it not decent to have the ark wander about with him, he knew not whither, and to expose it to all the hazards and inconveniencies which he himself was like to undergo; or he might suppose, that this would be a means to expose the priests to the violence of Absalom's rage, (as he had before exposed them to Saul's fury on another occasion), if God, in his judgment, should permit him to prevail; or this might look as a distrust of the divine goodness, and that he placed more confidence in the token of God's presence, than he did in God himself, who had preserved him in the long persecution

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

fired them to carry it back, and to continue in Jerusalem, because they might be of use to gain him intelligence of the enemies motions and designs, and their character was too sacred, to fear any violence from the usurper. Hushai † the Archite, his faithful friend and counsellor, came likewise to attend him, and, with all expressions of sorrow, to see his royal master in such distress, offered to share his fortune : But David enjoined him to return, and told him, that he would be more serviceable to him in the city, by pretending to adhere to Absalom, and by defeating the counsels of Ahitophel, who, as he understood for certainty, was † engaged in his son's measures, and whose great abilities (which the king was not unacquainted with) gave him no small uneasiness.

David had scarce passed over mount Olivet, which lies to the eastward of Jerusalem, when Ziba, whom he had made steward to Mephibosheth, his friend Jonathan's son, came, and presented him with a ‡ considerable quantity

persecution of Saul, when he had no ark with him. But what seems the chief reason, at that time, for his sending back the ark, was, — That the priests and Levites, (of whose fidelity he was sufficiently satisfied), by giving him intelligence of the enemies motions, might do him more service in Jerusalem, than they could do in his camp; *Pool's Annotations.*

† This man might be of the ancient race of the Archites, descendants from Canaan, of whom Moses speaks, Gen. x. 17.; but since the name of these ancient people is differently written, I should rather think, that this additional name was given him from the place of his nativity, viz. Archi, a town situated on the frontiers of Benjamin and Ephraim, to the west of Bethel; *Jesb. xvi. 2.*

‡ The Jews are of opinion, that Ahitophel was incensed against David, and therefore ready to go over to the adverse party, because he had abused Bathsheba, whom they take to have been his grand-daughter, because she was the daughter of Eliam, 2 Sam. xi. 3. and Ahitophel had a son of that name, 2 Sam. xxiii. 34. For this reason they imagine, that he advised Absalom to lie with his father's concubines, that he might be repaid in kind; though the Scripture assigns another, viz. that he and his father might thereby become irreconcilable enemies; *Pool's Annotations.*

‡ And yet the text tells us, it was but one bottle; but what we render *bottle*, was, in those times, a bag, or vessel made of leather, which might contain a great deal of wine; because we cannot suppose, but that the liquor was proportionate to the rest of the present: *Patrick's Commentary.*

of wine and other provisions; but, upon the king's inquiring for his master, who he thought above all men, in point of gratitude should have kept firm to his interest, the perfidious wretch accused him of staying behind in Jerusalem, in hopes that himself might be made king; and the too credulous king, in this general distraction of his affairs, believing the accusation to be true, made an hasty grant of all Mephibosheth's estate to this base servant and treacherous sycophant.

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Chris.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

As David drew near to Bahurim, a city in the tribe of Benjamin, † one Shimei, a descendent from the family of Saul, and who dwelt in that place, came out, and threw stones at him, and, in the hearing of the whole company, loaded him with the bitterest reproaches and execrations, so that Abishai desired leave of the king to go and dispatch the insolent rebel: but by no means would the king permit him, but bore all with an admirable patience, † and resignation to the will of God, as being conscious of his own guilt in the case of Uriah, and of the divine justice in thus afflicting him.

While David continued at Bahurim, Absalom and his party entering Jerusalem, were received with the general acclamations of the people, and Hushai, not forgetful of the king's instructions, went to compliment him, and offered him his service. Absalom knew that he was his father's intimate friend and counsellor, and therefore bantered him at first, upon his pretending to desert his old master;

† Whether this man had been a personal sufferer in the fall of Saul's family, or what else had exasperated him against David, it no where appears; but it seems, as if he had conceived some very heinous offence against him, when neither the presence of a king, nor the terror of his guards, could restrain him from throwing stones, and bitter speeches at him: And it looks as if the king were fallen into the utmost contempt, when one private man could think of venting his malice at him in so gross a manner with impunity; *Howell's History, in the notes.*

† The words of David upon this occasion are, *So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David: Let him alone, let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him:* Not that God commanded it by his word, for that severe y forbids cursing, Exod. xxii. 28. nor moved him to it by his spirit; for neither was that possible, because God tempteth no man, James i. 13. But the meaning is, that the secret providence of God did overrule and determine him

A. M. master: but Hushai † excused himself in such a manner, 2949, &c.
 Ant. Christ. and answered all his questions with that subtilty, that he 1055, etc.
 from 2 Sam. ly was received into his privy-council.

i. to xix. A council was presently called, wherein Ahitophel, who
 Ahitophel's was president, and stood highest in Absalom's esteem,
 counsel, up- spake first; and the two chief things which he advised him
 on the re- to do, were, first to place a tent on the top of the
 jection of palace, (for by this time he had taken possession of his fa-
 which he ther's palace), and to lie publicly with his father's concu-
 hangs him- bines, that all the soldiers might see, and conclude that, af-
 self. ter such an indignity, there could be no hopes of a recon-
 ciliation, and thereby be incited to fight more desperately
 to secure him in the possession of the throne. This advice
 was suitable perhaps to the young man's vicious inclinations,
 and therefore he delayed not to put it in execution: But as
 for the second thing which Ahitophel proposed, viz.
 "To take twelve thousand choice men, and pursue after

him so to do, i.e. God did not put any wickedness into Shimei's heart, (for he had of himself an heart full of malignity and venom against David), but only left him to his own wickedness; took away that common prudence which would have restrained him from so dangerous an action; directed his malice, that it should be exercised against David, rather than any other man; and brought him into so distressed a condition, that he might seem a proper object of his scorn and contempt, which is enough to justify the expression, *The Lord hath bidden him*; in the same manner that we read of his *commanding the ravens*, 1 Kings xvii. 4. and sometimes inanimate creatures, Psal. cxlvii. 15, 18. The short is, David looked upon Shimei as an instrument in God's hands, and therefore took all his abuses patiently, out of a consciousness of his sinfulness, and a reverence to that Deity who had brought him so low, as to deserve the insults of this vile Benjamite; *Pool's Annotations*.

† The manner in which Josephus makes Hushai answer Absalom, is artful enough, though hardly becoming an honest man, "There is no contending" says he, "with the will of God, and the consent of the people; and so long as you have them on your side, you may be secure of my fidelity. It is from God that you have received your kingdom; and if you can think me worthy of a place in the number of those you will vouchsafe to own, you shall find me as true to yourself as ever I was to your father. No man is to account the present state of things uneasy, so long as the government continues in the same line, and a son of the same family succeeds to the throne; *Jewish Antiq. lib. vii. c. 8*.

"David

“ David that * very night, and to fall upon his guards, which were fatigued with their march, and unable to make resistance, and so surprise the king, and kill him,” he desired to consult Hushai herein; who, seeming not to flight Ahitophel’s proposal, advised rather to delay the attempt, until he had got all the forces of the kingdom together. “ For, as David and his men were known to be brave, and, at that time, both † exasperated and desperate, in case they should worst the party sent against them, this would be a means to discourage others, and be thought a very inauspicious beginning: “ Whereas, if they staid till a numerous army were come together, † they might be assured of victory.” Abshalom,

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1035, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

* It is a wise observation in Tactus, *Nihil in discordiis civilibus festinatione letius, ubi facto, potius quam consulto, opus est*. Ahitophel therefore thought it highly necessary to make dispatch upon this occasion; because he knew, that if he should give the people that had revolted from their allegiance, leisure to think of what they were doing against their lawful prince, he would give that prince time to raise some regular troops, and those that were about him space to recover from their first fright; Abshalom’s party would dwindle into nothing, and David’s grow stronger and stronger: *Daret malorum penitentia, daret bonorum consensui; scelera impetu, bona concilia mori, valescere*; Tacit. hist. lib. i. And therefore he advised marching immediately against him, without giving him a moment’s time to recover himself; *Calmet’s Commentary*.

† There is something very plausible, and elegant too, in the advice which Hushai gives Abshalom, not immediately to pursue and fall upon David: *Thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field*, 2 Sam. xvii. 8. Every one knows, that a bear is a very fierce creature; but she-bears (as Aristotle tells us) are more fierce than the male, particularly when they have young ones, but, most of all, when these young ones are taken from them. For this reason the scriptures make frequent use of this similitude: *I will be unto them as a lion*, says God, in relation to the people of Israel, *and as a leopard by the way*; *I will meet them as a bear, that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rent the caul of their hearts*, Hosea xiii. 7. 8. *Vid.* Prov. xvii. 12. &c. So that the purport of Hushai’s advice is founded on this maxim, “ That we should not drive an enemy to despair, nor attack those who are resolved to sell their lives at as dear a rate as possible;” *Calmet’s Commentary*.

† The benefits which Hushai suggests, from Abshalom’s having a large army, are thus expressed in an hyperbolical way, suitable to the genius of that insolent young man, to whom he gave his ad-

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1059, etc.
from 2 Sam.
18 to xix.

lom, and the rest of the council, approved of this last advice, and Hushai immediately dispatched two messengers to David, acquainting him with what had passed in council, and advising him instantly to pass the Jordan, lest Absalom should change his mind, and come and fall upon him on a sudden.

The messengers, as they were making the best of their way, happened to meet some of Absalom's party, but had the good fortune to conceal themselves in a well, until their pursuers were returned; and then, proceeding on their journey, came and delivered their dispatches to the king, who decamped by break of day, passed the Jordan, and came to Mahanaim, a city of Gilead, where he was kindly received. As soon as Ahitophel heard that David was out of danger, either taking it amiss that his counsel was slighted, or perceiving by Absalom's weak conduct that things were no likely to succeed, and he consequently * liable to be exposed to David's hottest indignation, for the counsel he had already given; partly out of pride, and partly out of fear of worse torments, he went to his own house, where he first made his will, and then hanged himself.

vice; and therefore more likely to prevail with him: *Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there,* 2 Sam. xvii. 13. Where his meaning is, that if David should quit the open field, and betake himself to the strongest of their cities, encompassed with high walls and deep ditches, such a numerous army (as he proposed) would be sufficient to begirt it round, and by ropes put about the walls, draw them down and all the houses of the city, into the ditch that ran about it: not that any such practice was ever used in war, and therefore the words must be looked upon as merely thraasonical, and calculated to please Absalom; unless we will say with some, that the word in the original may denote such machines as are worked by ropes, and were at that time in use to batter down walls; *Cabnet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

* Josephus thus relates the matter.——“ When Ahitophel was come home to Galmon, he called his family together, and told them the advice which he had given Absalom, but that he would not follow it; and that in a short time that refusal would be his ruin: for David would certainly baffle him, and soon recover his kingdom. Now it is more honourable for me,” says he, “ to die, asserting my liberty like a man, than to wait sneaking till David comes in again, and to be slain at last for the services I have done the son against the father;” *Jewish Antiq. lib. vii. c. 9.*

David

David had not been long at Mahanaim, before Absalom, having got together a numerous army, which was commanded by Amasa, the son of Ithra, a relation of Absalom's by marriage, left Jerusalem, and passed the Jordan, in pursuit of his father. The king, hearing of the approach of his rebel son, and foreseeing that a battle was unavoidable, divided his army into three bodies. The first to be commanded by Joab, the second by his brother Abishai, and the third by † Ittai, the Gittite, and himself intended to go in person with them. But by the importunity of the people about him, he was prevailed with not to hazard his person in battle; and perhaps was more easily dissuaded from it, because the battle was to be against a son, for whom he still retained so tender an affection, that he gave the three generals a strict charge, in the hearing of the soldiers, that (for his sake) they should use Absalom kindly, in case he should fall into their hands.

The two armies met in the † wood of Ephraim, which belonged to the tribe of Manasseh, where Absalom's army, though much superior in number, was defeated, and put to flight: for the loyalists, upon this occasion, behaved so gallantly, that they killed † twenty thousand of the

† In 2 Sam. xv. 18. we read, that *all the Gittites, six hundred men, which came after him (viz. David) from Gath, passed on before the king*; but who those Gittites were, it is hard to determine, because we have no mention made of them in any other part of Scripture. Some imagine that they were natives of Gath, who, taken with the fame of David's piety, and happy successes, came along with Ittai, (whom the Jews suppose to have been the son of Achish, King of Gath), and being profelyted to the Jewish religion, became part of David's guard, and attended him in his wars. But others rather think, that they were men of Jewish extract, but had this additional name, from their flying unto David (probably under the conduct of Ittai) while he was at Gath, and accompanying him ever after, not only in the time of Saul's persecution of him, but even after his accession to the united kingdoms of Judah and Israel; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† This wood was so called, (as some imagine), because the Ephraimites were wont to drive their cattle over Jordan to feed them in it; but others (with more probability) suppose, that it had its name from the great slaughter (related in Jud. xii.) which Jephthah had formerly made of the Ephraimites in that place; *Howell's History*, in the notes.

† The expression in the text is, *The wood devoured more people*

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.
An engagement between the King's and Absalom's party, wherein Absalom is vanquished and slain.

A. M. the rebels upon the spot, and would doubtless have carried the slaughter farther, had not Absalom (the chief cause of all this mischief) been taken and slain.

2949, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

His hair (as we said before) was of a prodigious length, and largeness; and as he was now in flight from the enemy, and riding with great speed under the trees, it happened to * entangle itself on one of the boughs in such a manner, that it lifted him off his saddle, and his mule, running from under him, left him there hanging in the air, and unable to disengage himself.

that day, than the sword devoured, 2 Sam xviii. 8. which some think was occasioned by their falling into pits, pressing one another to death in strait places, creeping into lurking holes, and there being starved to death, or otherwise devoured by wild beasts, which met them in their flight: but the most easy and simple meaning of the passage is, that there were more slain in the wood than in the field of battle. The field of battle, (as Josephus tells us, *Jewish Antiq. lib. vii. cap. 9.*) was a plain, with a wood contiguous to it; and therefore, when Absalom's army was put to the rout, and betook themselves to the wood for refuge, their pursuers made a great slaughter of them there than they otherwise would have done, because they could not run away so fast in the wood, as they might have done in the open field; *Patrick's Commentary.*

* The words in the text, indeed, make no mention of Absalom's hair in this place. They only inform us, that *Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth, and the mule, that was under him, went away, 2 Sam. xviii. 9.* From whence some infer, that the meaning of the historian is, not that Absalom hung by his hair, but that his neck was so wedged between the boughs, by the swift motion of the mule, that he was not able to disengage himself. For it is hardly to be questioned, say they, but that when he went to battle, he had an helmet on; and an helmet, which covered his head, would have hindered his hair from being entangled in the boughs: but it is only supposing, either that his helmet was such, as left a great deal of his hair visible and uncovered, or that, if it was large enough to inclose the whole, he might, upon this occasion, throw it off, (as well as his other heavy armour), to make himself lighter, and expedite his flight; and then there will be no incongruity in the common and received opinion, to which the authority of Josephus adds some confirmation, viz. "That as Absalom was making his escape, upon the whistling of the air, a snagged bow of a tree took hold of his hair, and the mule, running forward from under him, left him dangling in the air;" *Jewish Antiq. lib. vii. c. 9.*

In this condition a private soldier found him, and told it unto Joab, who blamed him for not having killed him; and when the man in excuse urged the command which he heard the king give the generals, to be very tender and careful of his son's life, Joab, looking upon all this as nothing, or as a command fitter for a parent than a king, went to the place where he was * hanging, and having first given him his death's wound himself, ordered the people, which were by, to dispatch him; and so went, and founded a retreat, to prevent any farther effusion of blood, and to give Absalom's party an opportunity of escaping to their respective homes.

Thus died the wicked and rebellious Absalom, and instead of an honourable interment fit for a king's son, his body was taken down, and thrown into a pit, and covered with an * heap of stones.

The

* Commentators have observed the justice of God, in bringing Absalom to a condign punishment, and such a kind of death, as was ordained by the law for offences like unto his. For whereas, in the first place, he was hanged as it were, this was declared by the law to be an accursed death, Deut. xxi. 23. and was afterwards, in some measure, stoned; this was the particular kind of death, that the law prescribed for a stubborn and rebellious son, Deut. xxi 21.

* In the description of the Holy Land, some geographers tell us, that this heap of stones remained even to their days, and that travellers, as they passed by it, were wont throw a stone to add to the heap, in detestation of his rebellion against his father. For tho' it became a custom among the Greeks, to raise an heap of stones in the place where any great person was interred, as a monument of honour and respect; yet it is plain, that none of David's army intended any honour to Absalom's memory in accumulating stones upon him; nor can we think, that David himself (though too fond of this rebel son) made any alteration afterwards in the form of his burial, for fear of enraging the people against him. Some, however, are of a quite contrary opinion, viz. that David, who lamented him with such excess, removed him from this pit, in order to have him laid in the sepulchre belonging to the kings, or perhaps somewhere about the place where the monument which goes under his name, and even to this day is shewn to travellers, was dug in a rock. It is a little chamber wrought with a chisel, out of one piece of rock, which stands at some distance from the rest of the mountain, and is a square of eight paces from out to out. The inside of this chamber is all plain, but the outside is adorned with some pilasters of the same kind of stone.

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

THE OBJECTION.

“ **T**HIS indeed was the woful end of David’s favour-
 “ ite fon and heir ; but to his own misconduct the
 “ father might impute the irregularities of his children,
 “ since, either by an over-weening fondness to them, a ta-
 “ cit connivance at what they did amifs, or an exemplary
 “ encouragement given to it by himself, he suffered iniqui-
 “ ty to abound among them. For after his adultery with
 “ Uriah’s wife, (and yet one would think he had women
 “ enough of his own), and the base murder of her gal-
 “ lant husband, for which no excuse, no colour of apolo-
 “ gy can be made, with what face could he reprove,
 “ much more chastise (as it deserved) the incestuous rape
 “ of his fon Amnon upon the beauteous Tamar, or the
 “ barbarous and bloody revenge which Absalom took up-
 “ on this brother for violating his sister’s honour ?

“ Had David interposed but his paternal authority, and
 “ punished Amnon’s crime with the severity it required,
 “ Absalom’s resentment had perhaps never broke out into
 “ fuch violence as it did ; but where do we read of any
 “ punishment, any disgrace, nay, even of any discounte-
 “ nance, put upon Amnon for his brutal and impious u-
 “ sage of his sister ? All that the historian tells us of the
 “ matter is, that (c) *when King David heard of these things,*
 “ *he was very wroth* : But his wrath, it seems, he kept
 “ to himself ; he shewed no tokens of it to the offender ;
 “ and therefore Absalom, when he saw his father conni-
 “ ving at the thing, undertook to do himself justice, and
 “ to avenge the dishonour done to his family.

“ In this however he acted very wickedly : but then,
 “ why did not his father call him to an account for it ?
 “ Why did he suffer him (d) to escape into Geshur, and

stone. The upper part, or covering, is made in the form of a
 conic pyramid, pretty high and large, with a kind of flower pot
 on its top. The pyramid is composed of several stones, but the
 monument itself is square, and cut out of one block. In the time
 of Josephus, the monument, which was said to be Abalom’s, was
 nothing more than one marble pillar, widely different from what,
 at present, goes under his name ; and which therefore must be
 accounted a more modern building ; *Le Clerc’s* and *Patrick’s Com-*
mentaries ; *Jewish Antiq. lib. vii. cap. 9.* and *Calmiet’s Diction-*
ary, under the word *Absalom*.

(c) 2 Sam. xiii. 21.

(d) Ver. 37.

“ not

“ not immediately send messengers to apprehend him ? In-
 “ stead of demanding him of the king of Geshur, in order
 “ to bring him to justice, the historian tells us, that (e)
 “ the *soul of King David longed to go forth unto Absalom* ;
 “ and that, not long after, upon a very frivolous pre-
 “ tence, viz. the false and impertinent tale of a canting old
 “ woman, he took occasion to recall him : And when he
 “ was recalled, suffered him to launch into greater extra-
 “ vagancies than ever prince had done before.

A. M.
 2949, etc.
 Ant. Christ.
 1055, &c.
 from 2 Sam.
 i. to xix.

“ It is not much to be wondered at, that a young
 “ prince, of a proud, ambitious spirit, with all this impu-
 “ nity and encouragement, should come at last to affect
 “ the government, and depose his father ; but certainly
 “ David appears to be a very weak man, when he gives
 “ his generals this charge concerning a rebel in arms a-
 “ gainst him ; (f) *Deal gently, for my sake, with the young*
 “ *man, even with Absalom* : And Joab seems to be no ve-
 “ ry good subject, when, notwithstanding the king's com-
 “ mand, (g) *he took three darts in his hand, and thrust*
 “ *them through the heart of Absalom*. But in this he might
 “ the rather presume upon being pardoned by a man, who
 “ had passed by his base and treacherous murder of Ab-
 “ ner, without the least censure or rebuke.

“ To be a terrour to evil-workers, even though they be
 “ our nearest friends and relations, and to be kind and
 “ merciful to such as behave gallantly, even though they
 “ be our greatest enemies, are no improper rules of con-
 “ duct in any great prince : And yet how very reverse were
 “ David's actions to these, when we find him winking at
 “ murder at home, and pursuing, with the most exquisite
 “ tortures, such people as opposed his measures, by fight-
 “ ing for their liberty abroad ?

“ For what can we say, for his putting the inhabitants
 “ of Rabbah, as well as the other cities of the Ammonites,
 “ (h) *under saws, and under harrows, and under axes, and*
 “ *making them pass through the brick kiln* ? What shall we
 “ say to his making war against Ishbosheth, Saul's son and
 “ heir, when himself (i) had sworn to the father, that he
 “ would not cut off his seed, or destroy any of his family ?
 “ What shall we say, to his taking the advantage of Abner's
 “ resentment (k) to draw him aside from his master's ser-

(e) Ver. 39. (f) Ibid. xviii. 5. (g) 2 Sam. xviii. 14.
 (h) Ibid. xii. 31. (i) 1 Sam. xxiv. 21, 22. (k) 2 Sam. iii. 13.

A. M.
2949, &c.
Anc. Chris.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
1. to XIX.

“ vice, and to enter into a league (for the promotion of his
“ own cause) with a very wicked man ? And lastly, what
“ shall we say (*l*) to his obliging Hushai to use all manner
“ of falsehood to Absalom ; to act the hypocrite, and tell
“ intumerable lies, on purpose to get into his confidence,
“ and so betray his counsels ? These, and several other in-
“ stances, that might be produced in this period of history,
“ are enough to convince us, that how much soever Da-
“ vid’s piety and righteousness may be extolled by some,
“ in his public capacity he was a weak prince, and in his
“ private, a bad ruler of his family ; partial to his friends,
“ cruel to his enemies, false to his promises, unjust in his
“ distributions, and deceitful in his transactions with man-
“ kind ; guilty of murder and adultery* himself, and a
“ tame conniver at those who committed the like offences.

“ But well may the historian leave these imputations
“ upon David’s character, when he is not afraid to load
“ Almighty God with an accusation of captious cruelty.
“ For what less can we call (*m*) his striking Uzzah dead up-
“ on the spot, merely for putting out his hand, and laying
“ hold on the ark, (which some would be apt to think
“ proceeded from respect and reverence, more than any
“ profanation of it), when, by the stumbling of the oxen,
“ it was in danger of being overturned ; and when he is
“ not ashamed to relate such incongruous and incredible
“ things (*n*) as the sound of mens marching upon the tops
“ of mulberry trees ; as (*o*) the extravagant story of a crown
“ (worn by the King of Rabbah, and afterwards by Da-
“ vid), which weighed an hundred and twenty-five pounds,
“ more than any human neck could bear ; and of (*p*) an
“ head of hair belonging to Absalom, whose very clippings
“ came to no less than four pounds and two ounces of our
“ weight ; with some other absurdities of the like nature ?”

Answered,
by shewing
why David
had so ma-
ny wives.

David, no doubt, was a very fond father to his chil-
dren, and a tender husband to his wives : Of these, it
must be owned he had too many, eighteen in number, if
we will reckon his concubines into that relation, which, in
those days did not much differ from the other, except in
some rites and solemnities of marriage. But as Polyga-
my was then tolerated among the Jews, (*q*) and the prohi-
bition of a king’s multiplying wives to himself does no where

(*l*) Ibid. xv. 34.

(*m*) Ibid. vi. 7.

(*n*) Ibid. v. 24.

(*o*) Ibid. xii. 30.

(*p*) Ibid. xiv. 26.

(*q*) Deut. xvii. 17.

limit the number of them, David might conceive that this polygamy was no transgression of the law, and thence be induced more readily to comply with it, in order to enlarge his family, and attach the principal nobility of his own nation, as well as some foreign potentates, more closely to his interest. (r) For it was always looked upon as a piece of political wisdom in princes, to endeavour to have many children, that by matching them into several powerful families, they might have more supporters of their authority, and more assistance, in case of any invasion of it.

This however is no part of David's commendation, how much soever it might tend to his security : but that a father should be fond of a son, and in some instances carry that fondness to excess ; that he should be blind to his lesser faults, and always inclinable, upon proper tokens of repentance, to forgive the greater ; that he should love to see every thing look gay and handsome about him, be liberal to his decent expences, and ready to overlook some little extravagancies ; that he should be uneasy in his absence, joyous to see him, and when he is in any imminent danger, very solicitous for his preservation, (which are all the articles brought against David in relation to his son Absalom). These are faults (if faults they be) which every good-natured parent, who feels the tender propensities of human nature towards those of his own flesh, will easily be induced to forgive : and well were it for David, if we could make the like apology for that great enormity of his, in the matter of Uriah ; but * instead of attempting any extenuation of it, we shall rather take notice of the several aggravations which moralists have discovered in it, and of the reasons for which the Spirit of God thought proper to record it in holy writ.

(r) Patrick's Commentary on 2 Sam. v. 13.

* But contrary to this, the Jewish writers have endeavoured to justify David in this whole transaction ; and to this purpose have invented laws and customs, that are no where to be found, either in the books of Moses, or in the compass of their history. They pretend that David was married to Bathsheba before her husband was dead, because it was a custom (as they say) for soldiers, whenever they went to the wars, to give their wives a bill of divorce, and consequently a full licence to marry whom they pleased. But it is in vain to attempt to excuse this black and crying sin in David, for which God so severely punished him, and for which he himself was always ready to acknowledge the divine justice in so doing ; *Calmet's Commentary* on 2 Sam. xi. 27.

A. M. 2949, &c. Ant. Christ. 1055, &c. from 2 Sam. i. to xix.

To this purpose, some have observed, 1st, That (s) as David tarried at Jerusalem at the time when kings went forth to battle, he there indulged himself in ease and luxury, (which are the bane and rust of the mind), and so insensibly fell into those loose desires which drew him into such

The several aggravations of his crime.

vile perpetrations; so that the first cause of his sin was idleness. 2^d, They observe it as an aggravation of his crime, (t) that he certainly knew that Bathsheba was another man's wife, and yet deliberately and advisedly committed the sin; nay, that she was the wife of one who was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and therefore added scandal to his wickedness, or (as the text expresses it) (u) gave great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. 3^d, They observe, that there was perfidy added to this guilt, and a sinful contrivance, (x) in causing Uriah to be sent for home; in receiving him with great tokens of his favour, and in entertaining him with good cheer, that he might be the more desirous to enjoy the company of his wife, and so have the child, which was got in adultery, reputed his own. 4th, They observe, (y) from Uriah's answer, that had not David's heart been seared, he could not but have felt a strong remorse upon thinking how he had abused so brave a man, and how he indulged himself in sinful pleasures, while this man, and the rest of his army, gloriously endured all manner of hardships for the service of their country. 5th, They observe, (z) from his design upon Uriah's life, when he could not otherwise conceal his lewdness, how naturally one sin paves the way to another, and how, in a small compass of time, the fascination of sensual appetites is enough to change the very nature of mankind; since even he, who formerly spared Saul, unjustly seeking his life, is now put upon contriving the death of a very faithful servant, in a very base and unworthy manner. 6th, They observe it, as a farther aggravation of his crime of murder, that he not only exposed an innocent and faithful servant to be killed, but that, together with him, (a) several more brave men, set in the front of the battle, where the service was hottest, must necessarily have fallen in the attack; so blind was he to the public good, and so prodigal of his subjects lives, if he might but cover his

(s) 2 Sam. xi. 1. (t) Ibid. (u) Ibid. xii. 14. (x) Ibid. xi. 6, &c. (y) Ibid. xi. 11. (z) 2 Sam. xi. 15. (a) Ibid. ver. 15.

guilt, and gratify his lust. 7th, They observe, (b) from his answer to the messengers sent by Joab to acquaint him with Uriah's death, *viz. the sword devoureth one as well as another*, the vile hypocrisy and obduracy of his heart, imputing that to the chance of war, or rather to the direction of divine providence, which his conscience could not but tell him was of his own contrivance. 8th, and lastly, They observe, (c) from his marriage with Bathsheba, even before her husband was cold in his grave, how the eagerness of his indulged appetite had now extinguished (what in some sinners is last of all parted with, and for which he himself had lately embued his hands in blood) all sense of shame, and regard to reputation or decency.

A. M. 2949, &c. Ant. Christ. 1055, &c. from 2 Sam. i. to xix.

These are some of the aggravations observable in David's crime, which (besides his lust and cruelty) is loaded with too just an imputation of perfidy, of ingratitude, of hypocrisy, of deliberation, of obstinacy, and of shamelessness in sin: And for these purposes were they recorded in Scripture, that they might teach us the frailty of human nature, and how liable the best of men are, in some instances of their lives, to be overtaken with very gross faults: That they might shew us the natural gradation of one sin to another, and that, when once we have suffered our appetites to out-ray, in a short time it will not be in our power to set bounds to them, & would we never so fain: That they might caution us against sloth and idleness, against indulging any inordinate passion, or gazing upon any objects that may endanger our innocence: That they might remind us all, how much we stand in need continually of the divine assistance, and therefore how much we are concerned to pray with all prayer and supplication, and to watch, as well as pray, that we fall into no temptation: And, lastly, that they might inculcate that excellent precept which the apostle has laid down in these words: ——— (d) *Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye, that are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

Why they are recorded in Scripture.

One pernicious consequence of David's transgression very likely was, that it made him timorous in inflicting punishments upon others; but the reason which Josephus assigns for his not chastising Amnon for his incestuous rape,

Why David did not punish Amnon;

(b) Ibid. ver. 25.

(c) Ibid. ver. 27.

(d) Gal. vi. 1.

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

viz. because he was his eldest son, and he loved him, and would not displease him, is a groundless calumny, and mere fiction; for (e) since the sacred history has thought fit to be silent in this matter, no one can tell what his father either said or did to him. The true reason therefore, as we suppose, why his father did not proceed with severity against him, was, because the case (as it then stood) was intricate and perplexed, and such as the law had made no provision for. The law concerning rapes is worded thus:—(f) If a damsel that is a virgin, be betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; then ye shall bring them both out of the gate of the city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die: The damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man because he humbled his neighbour's wife: And again, If a man find a damsel, that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; then the man, that lay with her, shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he hath humbled her; he may not put her away all his days. These are the two principal laws concerning this matter, but neither come up to the case now before us. For, had David punished Amnon's crime with death, as the former law requires, Tamar, in like manner, must have suffered too, (even though she was innocent), because she cried not out; and though she was not a betrothed damsel, (as the case is put in the latter law), yet David could not compel Amnon to marry her, because such a marriage would have been incestuous; and therefore we may suppose, that though David might reprimand his son very severely for having wrought folly in Israel; yet he could not bring him before a public judicature, because the law did not properly extend to his case, or if he had made it extend, the innocent must have suffered with the guilty; and (g) a rule of equity I think it is, rather to let the guilty escape, than that the innocent and injured should be destroyed.

nor Absalom for murdering him.

The sacred historian has taken care to clear David from any base connivance at Absalom's wickedness in murdering his brother Amnon, by telling us, that as soon

(e.) Le Clerc's Commentary on 2 Sam. xiii. 21. (f.) Deut. xxii. 23, &c. (g.) The History of the life of King David.

as he had done it, (b) *he fled and went to Talmi*, his grandfather, by his mother's side, who was then King of Geshur. A. M. 2949, etc. Ant. Christ. 1055, etc. from 2 Sam. i. to xix. Geshur was a city in Syria, which lay on the other side of Jordan; and Absalom, who meditated the murder of his brother, and could not but foresee that it would be an act of high displeasure to his father, invited the princes of the blood to his country-seat, which was (i) near the city Ephraim, not far from the river Jordan, that he might have a better opportunity, not only for putting in execution his wicked design, but of making his escape likewise: So that David (had he been ever so much minded) could not possibly have apprehended him, before he had got to a safe retreat: and where it is easy to imagine, he would tell his tale so well, as to gain his grandfather's protection, if not approbation of the fact, which, with a small share of eloquence, might be so set off, as to appear a necessary vindication of the honour of their family, which had been so grossly violated.

The law of God indeed is very express: — (k) *Who-so-ever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: (l) neither shall he take any satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death.* Whereby it appears, that the supreme magistrate was obliged to execute justice upon all wilful murderers without any reservation; nor had David any power to dispense with God's laws, or to spare those whom he had commanded him to destroy. But then it must be considered, that the affront which Amnon put upon Absalom, was very great and heinous; that Absalom, at this time, was out of the reach of David's justice, and so would have continued, had he not obtained a promise of impunity; that, by living an exile in an Heathenish country, David had reason to apprehend, that his son was in danger of being infected with their wicked and idolatrous practices, and was therefore the rather inclined to recal him; and that the clamours and importunities of the people, which Joab procured this woman of Tekoah to represent to the king in a very free and artful manner, did almost compel him to do it: For, what he said in the case of Joab's murder of Abner, viz. that he could not revenge it, because (m) *the sons of Zeruiah were too hard for him*; the like very pro-

Why he recalled him.

(b) 2 Sam. xiii. 37. (i) Ibid. ver. 23. Vide John xi. 54.
(k) Gen. ix. 6. (l) Numb. xxxv. 31. (m) 2 Sam. iii. 39

A. M. 2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

and let him
live splen-
didly;

and desired
his life to
be spared.

bably, might have been said in this case, where the people's hearts were so strongly, and so universally, set upon Absalom; and that the rather, because his long banishment moved their pity, and his absence made them more impatient for his return. The eyes of all in short, were upon him, as the next heir, as a wife and gallant, and amiable prince, unhappy only in this instance of killing Amnon, for which he had a sufficient provocation; and therefore, to satisfy the cries of the people, as well as to provide for the security of his kingdom, which seemed to depend on the establishment of the succession in Absalom, David was obliged to forgive him, and recal him. And when he was recalled, and reinstated in the king's favour, it is no wonder that a young prince, of his gay temper, should multiply his attendants, and set up a rich equipage, to attract the eyes and admiration of mankind; or that his father, whose riches so well enabled him to bear the expence of this magnificence, and whose heart rejoiced perhaps to see his son the favourite of the people, did not restrain him in it; because a man of an open spirit himself loves to see his children make a figure in life, which, in all eastern countries, was a thing customary, and might here more especially be expected in the eldest and heir presumptive to the crown.

(n) Some of the Jewish doctors tell us, that how indulgent soever David might be to his son Absalom, he never intended him for his successor in the kingdom; that he had all along made a promise to Bathsheba, his favourite queen, (which promise, though (o) recorded later in the history, might at first come to Absalom's ear), that her son Solomon should succeed in the regal dignity; and that Absalom, both from a consciousness of his own demerits, and of the superiority of wisdom and piety that appeared in Solomon, perceiving that his father intended to postpone him, and instate the other, entered into this rebellion, in order to assert his birth-right to the crown. But the fault in David was not any exclusion of right, but too blind an indulgence to his son, even while he was in arms against him, ready to kill, and resolved to depose him: *Spare ye the young man*, says he; and this he might desire, partly from a consciousness of his own sin in the case of Uriah, which was the meritorious and procuring cause of the rebellion, in which his son was unhappily engaged; partly from a consideration

(n) Pool's Annotations on 2 Sam. xv. 7. (o) 1 Kings i. 30.
of

of his youth, which is commonly foolish and giddy, and subject to evil counsels, and therefore deserves pity; and partly from a sense of piety in himself, as being unwilling that he should be cut off in a sinful rebellion, without any space or means of repentance.

A. M. 2946, &c. Ant. Christ. 1055, &c. from 2 Sam. i. to x. x.

These might be some of the reasons that made David give his army so strict a charge not to kill his son, in case they should take him: But Joab had quite different sentiments of the matter. He perceived, that there could be no safety to the king, nor peace to the kingdom, no security to himself, or other loyal subjects, as long as Absalom lived; that notwithstanding this unnatural rebellion, the king was still inclinable to forgive him, and that there would always be some unquiet people, that would be moving fresh disturbances, in order to set him on the throne. Looking upon this charge, therefore, as an order more proper for a parent than a prince, he ventured to disobey it. For he thought with himself, (*p*) that the king ought not to be observed in an affair, wherein he shewed more regard to his private passion, than to the public good; that fathers should always sacrifice their paternal tenderness to the interest of the government; and that as Absalom had forfeited his life to the laws upon several accounts, it was but justice now to take this opportunity of dispatching him, as an enemy to his king and country: But whether, in this act of disobedience to the royal command, Joab is perfectly to be vindicated, we shall not pretend to determine. It is certain, that he was a person of a bold temper, high passions, and fiery resentments; that valued himself upon the services he had done the king, and seemed not to be much afraid of his authority.

and why Joab might think proper to kill him.

The complaint which David makes to some of his courtiers, upon this general's murdering the famous Abner, declares the true reason why he could not, at that time, put the laws in execution against him: — (*q*) *Know ye not, says he, that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? And I am this day weak, though anointed King; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me: The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.* Joab was David's sister's son, or nephew, (*r*) who had stuck close to him in all his adversity, an excel-

Why David did not punish him for the murder of Abner.

(*p*) Calmet's Commentary on 2 Sam. xviii. 14. (*q*) 2 Sam. iii. 38. (*r*) Patrick's Commentary on 2 Sam. iii. 39.

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

lent soldier himself, and a man of great power and authority among the army; so that had David immediately called him to justice for this vile act against Abner, such was his interest among the soldiery, that he soon would have caused a mutiny or revolt, and found a means to shock or unhinge the government that was not as yet sufficiently established. It was a point of prudence therefore in David, to delay the punishment of so powerful and so perilous a man, until a more convenient season, and only, for the present, to express his detestation of the deed; by commending the deceased, condemning the murder, and commanding the murderer (by way of penance) to attend the funeral in sackcloth, and other ensigns of mourning.

So far is David from winking at Abner's murder, that we find him burying him with great solemnity, and making mournful lamentation over his grave; praising his valour, and other great qualities, publicly, and cursing the author of his untimely death: (*s*) *I, and my kingdom, says he, are guiltless before the Lord forever from the blood of Abner, the son of Ner: Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that taketh bread.*

Why he

was so cruel
to the Am-
monites.

But what apology shall we make for his treating the Ammonites so inhumanly, and putting them to such exquisite torments, only for a small indignity, which a young king, at the instigation of some evil counsellors, put upon his ambassadors, since there seems to be no proportion between the affront and the revenge, between the one's having their beards and clothes cut a little shorter, and the other's being put under saws and harrows, or thrown into hot burning furnaces? Had David indeed been the inventor of such frightful punishments, we might have justly reckoned him a man of the same cruel and brutal spirit, as was Caligula, who, in after ages, (as (*t*) Suetonius tells us) was wont to take a great delight in inflicting them: But, the truth is, that these were the punishments which the Ammonites inflicted upon the Jews, whenever they took them prisoners; and therefore David, when he conquered their country, and reduced their capital city, used them with the like cruelty: Not every one of them indiscriminately, but such on-

(*s*) 2 Sam. iii. 28, 29.

(*t*) Cap. 27.

ly as appeared in arms against him, and had either advised, or approved the advice of putting such a disgrace upon his messengers.

The Ammonites, it is certain, were early initiated into all the cruelties of the people of Canaan: When they invested Jabez Gilead, and the besieged made an offer to surrender, the easiest condition that they would grant them, was, that they might (u) *thrust out all their right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon Israel for ever*; which one instance, as I take it, is in the room of ten thousand proofs, to demonstrate, that these Ammonites were monsters of barbarity; and that therefore King David was no more culpable for retaliating upon them the same cruelties that they used to inflict on others, than the people of Agrigentum were, for burning Phalaris in his own bull, or Theseus the hero, for stretching Procrustes beyond the dimensions of his own bed. For even the Heathen casuists have determined, that no law can be more just and equitable, than that which decreed artists of cruelty to perish by their own arts.

The particular punishment of passing through the brick-kilns, an ingenious (x) author seems fairly to account for, by making this conjecture.——“ It is very well known, says he, that the Jews were slaves in Egypt, and particularly employed in brick-making. Now it is natural for all people at enmity, to reproach one another with the meanness and baseness of their original. As therefore the Ammonites were a cruel and insolent enemy, and nothing could be more natural for men of their temper, when they had got any Jews in their power, than to cry out, Send the slaves to the brick-kilns, and so torture them to death; so nothing could be more natural than for the Jews, when they got an advantage over them, to return them the same treatment.” However this be, it is certain that the siege of Rabbah began before David had any criminal commerce with Bathsheba, and if the town was not taken till after Solomon’s birth, (as the sequel of his history seems to imply), the siege must last for about two years; in which time, upon the supposition that David continued in an obdurate state of sin and impenitence, and was therefore deprived of that mild and merciful spirit for which he had formerly been so remarkable; there is no wonder, if being now become cruel and hard-hearted, as

(u) 1 Sam. xi. 2.
David.

(x) The History of the life of King

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

well as exasperated with the length of the siege, he treated the Ammonites in the same outrageous manner that they were accustomed to treat his subjects, not only to retaliate the thing upon them, but to deter all future ages likewise from violating the right of nations, by treating the persons of public ambassadors with contempt.

That the rights of ambassadors are guarded by all laws both divine and human, and that therefore a violation of these rights is not only unjust, but impious, is the general sentiments of all the most able (y) writers upon the laws and constitutions of civil government. So tender were the Romans in this particular, (z) that they appointed twenty *feciales* (as they called those officers) to inspect their good usage, and preserve their immunities; to make them immediate reparation, when any injury was done them; and, in case of a personal affront or indignity, to deliver up the offender, even though he were a noble or a patrician by birth, into the hands of the nation from whence the ambassador came, to be treated by them as they thought fit. And therefore we need less wonder, that King David, who in all his actions was a nice observer of every punctilio in public honour, should resent in so high a manner an indignity, the greatest that could be offered, put upon his ministers, and from them reflecting upon his own majesty, merely for sending a kind compliment of condolence to a foolish prince, (as he proved), upon the death of a very worthy father.

How he
kept his
promise
with Saul.

A man so zealous for his own honour, as well as for the right of nations, in his public capacity, can hardly be presumed to be an abettor of perfidy in his more private. We must therefore suppose, that, notwithstanding his war with Ishbosheth, wherein there might happen some skirmishes, he still kept his promise with his father Saul, not to destroy any of his family; and therefore in the whole compass of the war (in which, though it lasted seven years, we nowhere read of one battle fought) he acted in the defensive, not offensive part, and kept an army by him, not to destroy Saul's posterity, but merely to maintain himself in the possession of that regal dignity wherewith Samuel, by God's order and appointment, had invested him.

Ishbosheth knew very well, that Samuel had appointed David, and that God had appointed him to be his

(y) *Vide* Grotius, Selden, Puffendorff, &c. (z) Grotius, De jure belli, lib. ii. cap. 18.

father's successor in the whole kingdom of Israel. And therefore his opposing him in an hostile manner, was provocation enough, one would think, had not David remembered (a) his oath made to Saul, and thereupon overlooked this ill-treatment of his son, and pronounced him a (b) *righteous person*. The removal of an adversary, and dangerous competitor for a crown, might be thought a meritorious piece of service by some ambitious princes; but David was of another sentiment. His soul and his notions where the same as what inspired the great Alexander, when he took vengeance on Bassus for having killed his enemy Darius; (c) for he did not consider Darius so much in the capacity of an enemy, as Bassus in that of a friend to the person whom he had basely murdered. And it is not improbable, that his reflection upon the sad fate of Saul's unhappy family, and the solemn promise he had given for their preservation, as well as the design (d) of clearing himself from the least suspicion of having any hand in this barbarous regicide, prevailed with David to inflict upon the authors of it, the exemplary punishment of hanging them upon gibbets, to be a spectacle of abhorrence; of cutting off their right hands, (e) wherewith they had committed this execrable deed, and off cutting off their feet, wherewith they had made their escape from justice.

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

Abner indeed acted very basely, very treacherously, in deserting Ishbosheth (the king whom he had set up) upon a very slight provocation; but David had no concern in all this. The kingdom belonged to him by divine donation. Abner knew this before he proclaimed Ishbosheth; and therefore all the mischiefs of the civil war are chargeable upon him: Nor can David be blamed for receiving his own right, even though it was tendered to him by the hand of a bad man. The truth is, David did not delude Abner from his master, but Abner made the first overture of his service to him; and as this was no unfavourable opportunity of uniting the two contending kingdoms, which providence seemed to have thrown in his way, David had been perfidious, not only to his own interest, but to the establishment of the general peace of the nation, had he not fallen in with it. (f) He, no doubt, was privy to the cause of

Why he
might make
use of Ab-
ner's offer.

(a) 1 Sam. xxiv. 21. (b) 2 Sam. iv. 11. (c) Reputabat enim non tam hostem suum fuisse Duriuni, quam amicum ejus, a quo esset occisus; *Justin.* lib. xii. c. 6. (d) Le Clerc's Commentary. (e) Patrick's Commentary. (f) Calmet's Commentary on 2 Sam. iii. 12.

A. M. Abner's disgust: But, without approving either of his
 2949, etc. crime or his treason, he might lawfully make use of the
 Ant. Chris. traitor; nay, and confer on him some tokens of his fa-
 1055, etc. vour too, in consideration of the benefits he had received
 from 2 Sam. from him, and of some commendable qualities, either
 i. to xix. natural or political, that he had observed in him. The
 instrument is not to be regarded in all actions, and even a
 bad man, when he does good services, may merit a reward,
 and be received with some approbation.

No man indeed should engage another in a base or wicked action; (g) because, whether he commits the thing himself, or employs another to do it, the crime is the same; but it is not so (says (b) Grotius) if a person freely offers himself, without any solicitation or persuasion to it. In this case, it is not unlawful to use him as an instrument, in order to execute what is confessedly lawful for us to do: And, as it is not contrary to the law of arms to receive a deserter, who quits the enemy's party and embraces ours, so we cannot perceive how David could become culpable in taking the advantage of Abner's quarrel with Ishbosheth, when, without any application of his, he voluntarily sent to him, and offered him his service, and when the good providence of God seems to have employed the passion and angry resentment of that haughty general, in order to bring about his wise designs, and by the union of the two kingdoms, prevent the effusion of much blood.

His em-
 ploying
 Hushai
 supplant
 Absalom.

But what shall we say in excuse for his perfidy, when we find him putting his friend Hushai upon acting such a part, as but badly became a man of honour; upon going, and offering his service to his son Absalom, on purpose to betray him, or give him bad counsel? The words of David are these:———(i) *If thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O King; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant; then mayest thou for me defeat the counsels of Ahitophel.* But David, by these words, (say some interpreters), did not advise Hushai to betray Absalom, or, for his sake, to violate the laws of friendship, but purely to go and adjoin himself to Absalom, (who, by this time, had assumed the title of King, and could

(g) Nihil interest, utrum ipse scelus admittas, an alium propter te, admittere velis; August. in moribus Manichæ. (b) De jure belli, lib. iii. cap. 1. Transfugam jure belli recipimus; Grotius.

(i) 2 Sam. xv. 34.

not

not properly be addressed to without calling him so) in order to destroy the counsels of Ahitophel, just as a general sends his spies into the enemy's camp, to know what passes there; or as a king keeps in foreign courts his envoys, to gain intelligence of the designs that may be formed against him, and to defeat the resolutions that may be taken to his prejudice. But (whether these comparisons may come up to the case before us or no) it was certain, at this juncture, Absalom's business was to be upon his guard. The unjust war which he had declared against his father, gave his father a right to treat him as an open enemy, and to employ either force or artifice against him; nor can this conduct of his be blamed, unless we should say, that when kings are engaged in war, they are forbidden to disguise their true designs, even though it be a thing notorious, that upon this disguise the practice of stratagems in war (which were never yet accounted unlawful) is entirely founded.

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

The truth is, (*k*) Absalom, as a traitor, a murderer, a rebel, and, as far as in him lay, a parricide, had forfeited all the rights of society, but more especially as a rebel: for a rebel, who sets himself to overturn the established government, order, and peace of any community, does by that hostile attempt actually divest himself of all social rights in that community. And consequently David could be no more guilty of perfidy, in forming a design to supplant Absalom, nor Hushai guilty of villainy, in undertaking to put it in execution, than that man can be said to be guilty of sin, who deceives a mad-man, and turns him away from murdering his best friends.

The short of the matter is, Hushai's instructions were to negotiate David's interest among the rebels, as well as he could. This he could not do without seeming to act in a contrary character; and, in order to effect this, there was a necessity for his concealing himself; and conceal himself he could not, without some degree of dissimulation; and therefore the end which he proposed in what he did, *viz.* the prevention of that long train of mischiefs which always attends a civil war, was sufficient to justify the means which he took to accomplish it. For, though it is to be wished with (*l*) Cicero, that all lying and

And hushai's undertaking to do it.

(*k*) The History of the life of King David, vol. iii. lib. iii. c. 15.

(*l*) Offic. diffimu-

A. M. 2949, &c. Ant. Christ. 1055, &c. from 2 Sam. i. to xix.

diffimulation were utterly banished from human life ; yet, as others have maintained, that a beneficial falsehood is better than a destructive truth, a case may be so circumstantiated, as to make diffimulation, which (m) Lord Bacon says) “ is nothing else but a necessary dependent upon silence, highly necessary ; and a lie, which otherwise would be blameable in a slave, will deserve commendation (says (n) Quintillian) when a wise man makes use of it, to save his country by deceiving his enemy.” Now, as Hushai’s whole design was to deceive an open and declared enemy, who can doubt, but that he was at full liberty, by his address and subtilty, to disconcert the measures of those, whom all agree, that had he been so minded, he had licence to attack with open violence ? (o) To overcome an enemy, indeed by valour, rather than art, sounds more gallant, and by some has been thought a more † reputable way of conquest ; but since the laws of nature and arms have made no difference, and those of humanity and mercy seems to incline to that side wherein there is likely to be the least blood shed, Hushai may be said to have acted the worthy patriot, as well as the faithful subject, in breaking the force of an unnatural rebellion, and in putting it into his royal master’s mouth to say, (p) *the Lord is known to execute judgment ; the ungodly are trapped in the work of their own hands. They are sunk down in the pit that they made ; in the same net, which they hid privily, are their own feet taken.*

David’s
character.

Thus, though we are not obliged to vindicate David in every passage of his life, and think some of the crying sins he was guilty of utterly inexcusable ; yet (if we except these) we cannot but think, that although he was a very tender and indulgent parent, yet he was no encou-

(m) Serm. Fidel. lib. vi. (n) Quintil. Instit. orat. lib. xii. c. 1.

(o) Puffendorff’s Law of nature, lib. iv. c. 1.; and Grotius’s Right of peace, lib. iii. c. 1.

† Thus when Perseus, the Macedonian king, was deceived by the hopes of peace, the old Senators disallowed the act, as inconsistent with Roman bravery ; saying, That their ancestors prosecuted their wars by valour, not craft, not like the subtle Carthaginians, or cunning Grecians, among whom it was a greater glory to overcome their enemies by treachery, than true valour ; *Livy, lib. xlii. c. 47.* And it was a known principle of Alexander’s, that he scorned to steal a victory ; *Plutarch de Alex. ;* and *Q. Curtius lib. iv. c. 13,*

(p) Psal. ix. 15, 16,

rager of vice in his own family, or a tame conniver at it in others, had he not been restrained by reasons of state, sometimes, from punishing it ; that he was true to his promises, just in his distributions, and prudent, though not crafty, in his military transactions ; “ of a singular presence of mind, (as (q) Josephus speaks of him), to make the best of what was before him ; and of as sharp a foresight for improving all advantages, and obviating all difficulties, that were like to happen ;” tender to all persons in distress, kind to his friends, forgiving to his enemies ; and when at any time he was forced to use severity, it was only in retaliation of what other people had done to him.

A. M.
 2949, &c.
 Ant. Christ.
 1055, &c.
 from 2 Sam.
 i. to xix.

Happy were it for us, if we could account for the operations of God with the same facility that we can for the actions of his saints ; but his counsels are a great deep, and his judgments (just though they be) are sometimes obscure, and past finding out. For what shall we say to the fate of Uzzah ? Or what tolerable cause can we assign for his sudden and untimely end ? It was now near seventy years since the Israelites had carried the ark from place to place, and so long a disuse had made them forget the manner of doing it. In conformity to what they had heard of the Philistines, they put it into a new cart, or waggon ; but this was against the express direction of the law, (r) which ordered it to be borne upon men’s shoulders. It is commonly supposed, that Uzzah was a Levite, though there is no proof of it from Scripture ; but supposing he was, he had no right to attend upon the ark ; that province, by the same law, (s) was restrained to those Levites only who were of the house of Kohath : Nay, put the case he had been a Kohathite by birth, yet he had violated another command, which prohibited even these Levites, (though they carried it by staves upon their shoulders), (t) upon pain of death, to touch it with their hands : so that here was a threefold transgression of the divine will in this method of proceeding. The ark, (as some say) by Uzzah’s direction, was placed in a cart ; Uzzah, without any proper designation, adventures to attend it ; when he thought it in danger of falling, officiously he put forth his hand, and laid hold on it, (all violations of the divine commands),

Why God
 struck Uz-
 zah dead.

(q) Jewish antiq. lib. vii. c. 12.

(r) Numb. vii. 9.

(s) Ibid. iv. 15.

(t) Numb. vii. 9.

A. M. 2949, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

and this (as is supposed) not so much out of reverence to the sacred symbol of God's presence, as out of diffidence of his providence, as unable to preserve it from overturning. The truth is, this ark had so long continued in obscurity, that the people in a manner had lost all sense of a divine power residing in it, and therefore approached it with irreverence. This is implied in David's exhortation to Zadock and Abiathar, after this misfortune upon Uzzah : *(u) Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites ; sanctify yourselves therefore, both ye, and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel, unto the place that I have prepared for it ; for because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.* What wonder then, if God, being minded to testify his immediate presence with the ark, to retrieve the ancient honour of that sacred vessel, and to curb all licentious profanations of it for the future, should single out one that was the most culpable of many ; one, who in three instances was then violating his commands, to be a monument of his displeasure against either a wilful ignorance, or a rude contempt of his precepts, be they ever so seemingly small ; that, by such an example of terror, he might inspire both priests and people with a sacred dread of his majesty, and a profound veneration for his mysteries ?

The meaning of the sound in the mulberry-trees.

God indeed is left to his own pleasure, what signs he shall think fit to give to his people, upon any occasion, for their good ; but the more arbitrary and uncommon any sign is, the more it seems to have proceeded from God. Though therefore the sound of people's going upon the tops of trees, be a thing not so congruous to our conceptions, yet it will not therefore follow, that it was not the real sign which God gave David, because the stranger the phænomenon was, the greater assurance it conveyed of the divine interposition in his favour. Nor can the practicableness of the thing be disputed, since it was confessedly an host of angels (who could move on the tops of trees, as well as plain ground) that made this noise of an army's marching.

There is no reason, however, to acquiesce in this construction only. (x) The word *Beroche*, which we

(u) 1 Chron. xv. 12, 13.
in locum.

(x) Patrick's Commentary

render *tops*, in several places of Scripture, signifies the *beginnings* of things likewise; and in this acceptance, the sense of the sign which God gave David will be this: —
 “ When thou hearest a sound, as it were, of many men
 “ marching at the entrance of the place where the mul-
 “ berry-trees are planted, then do thou make ready to fall
 “ upon thine enemy; for this noise (which is occasioned
 “ by the ministry of my angels) goes before thee, both to
 “ conduct thee in thy way, and to inject terror into thine
 “ adversaries.”

A. M.
 2949, etc.
 Ant. Christ.
 1055, &c.
 from 2 Sam.
 i. to xix.

But how plausible soever, this interpretation may seem, there is some reason to suspect, that the other word *Bochim*, which our translation calls *mulberry-trees*, is in reality the proper name of a place. (y) The prophet Isaiah has a plain allusion to this piece of history, and seems to confirm what we here suggest. *The Lord, says he, shall rise up as in mount Perazim; he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon; i. e. he shall destroy his enemies, as he did the Philistines at Baal-Perazim, under David, and the Canaanites at Gibeon under Joshua: What hinders then, but that Beroche Bochim may signify the mountains of Bochim? And so the sense of the words will be, — “ When thou hearest a noise as of many people marching upon the hills, or high places of Bochim, then thou hast nothing to do, but to fall immediately upon the enemy.”* Either of these interpretations clears the text from any seeming absurdity; and I shall only observe farther, that from the passage of the above-cited prophet, as well as some expressions in the 18th Psalm, such as, (z) *He sent out his arrows, and scattered them; he cast forth lightnings and destroyed them*, it seems very likely, that a mighty storm of thunder and lightning, of hailstones, and coals of fire, (as the Psalmist calls it), was assistant to David in the Acquisition of this victory.

In the account of David's conquest of the Ammonites, the weight of their king's crown seems not a little monstrous. The weight of a talent, which, upon the lowest computation, amounts to no less than 123 pounds, is allowed to be too much for one neck to sustain; but then we should consider, that besides the crown that was usually worn, it was customary, in some nations, for kings

The weight
 of the king
 of Rabbah's
 crown ac-
 counted for;

(y) Isaiah xxviii. 21.

(z) Psal. xviii. 14.

A. M.
2049, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to x.x.

to have * vast large ones, (even to a size equal to this), either hung or supported, over the throne, where, at their coronation, or upon other solemn occasions, they were wont to sit.

The Jewish doctors indeed have a very odd conceit, viz. that David, when he took this crown from the king of Ammon, hung it up on high by a certain loadstone that he had; as if the power of the magnet were to attract gold, as well as iron. But let that be as it will, it is but to suppose, that the crown, here under debate, was of this larger kind, and that, by some means or other, it was supported over the king's head, while he was sitting on his throne, and then there will be an apparent reason for taking the crown from off, or (as the Hebrew words will bear it) *from over the king's head*, and placing it, in like manner, over David's head, even to indicate the translation of his kingdom to David.

(a) It is common thing, however, in Hebrew, as well as other learned languages, to have the same word signify both the weight and value of any thing. And that the price or worth of the crown is here the meaning of the phrase, we have the more reason to think, because mention is made of an addition of precious stones, which are never estimated by the weight of gold. (b) Josephus tells us of one stone of great value in the middle of the crown, which he calls a *sardonx*; and as we may suppose, that there were other jewels of several kinds placed at their

* The ancients make mention of several such large crowns as these, which were made for sight more than any thing else. Juvenal exposing the pride and vanity of some of the chief magistrates at Rome, describes the pomp and splendor of their appearance in these words:

Quod si vidisset prætorem in curribus altis
Extantem, et medio sublimen in pulvere circi,
In tunica Jovis, et pictæ ferrana ferentem
Ex humeris aulæ togæ, *magnæque coronæ*

Tantum orbem, quanto cervix non sufficit ulla. Sat. x.

Athenæus (lib. v. c. 8.) describes a crown made of gold, that was four and twenty feet in circumference, and mentions others, that were two, some four, and some five feet deep; as Pliny (lib. xxxiii. c. 3.) in like manner takes notice of some that were of no less than eight pounds weight; *Calmet's Comment. in locum.*

(a) Pool's Annotations; and Patrick's Commentary *in locum.*
(b) Jewish Antiq. lib. vii. c. 7.

proper

proper distances, these, in proportion as they heightened the value, must lessen the weight of the crown, and verify what the same historian tells us of it, viz. *that David wore it constantly on his head afterward for an ornament.* A. M. 29-9, &c. Ant. Christ. 1055, &c. from 2 Sam. i. to xix.

There is another difficulty still behind, which relates to the weight of Absalom's hair, that in the words of the text is thus expressed : ——— (c) *And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled it ; and because the hair was heavy on him, therefore he polled it), he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight.* In the explication of which words, the sentiments of the learned have been so many, and various, that we shall content ourselves with commenting upon some of the chief of them.

Those who are of opinion, that the words related only to the cuttings of Absalom's hair, make the two hundred shekels the price, and not the weight of them : And to this purpose they suppose, that though Absalom himself might not sell his hair, yet some persons about him might do it, in complaisance to the ladies of Jerusalem, who might not think themselves in the fashion, unless they wore a favourite lock of the Prince's. But besides the absurdity of the king's son suffering any of his domestics to sell his hair, the very words of the text are a confutation of this notion, where they tell us, that *he weighed the hair of his head* ; whereas, had it been sold, the buyer must have weighed the money, even (d) as Abraham did when he purchased the field of Ephron. Several opinions concerning it.

Others again pretend, that there is a manifest mistake crept into the text, which has been occasioned by an ignorant transcriber's inserting one numerical letter for another, the *Resch* instead of the *Daleth*, i. e. two hundred instead of four : But besides the uncertainty, whether the former Hebrews made use of their letters instead of figures, (whereof there is not the least sign or token in any ancient copies), wherein, I pray, would the great wonder be, if what was cut off from Absalom's head, (to thin and shorten his hair when it grew too weighty and troublesome to him), amounted to no more than four shekels, which is much about two ounces ! And yet the whole design of

(c) 2 Sam. xiv. 26.

(d) Gen. xxiii. 16.

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

this narration seems to portend something more than usual, in this prodigious increase of Absalom's hair.

The text, however, does not speak of the cuttings of the hair, but of the head of hair itself, when it talks of the weight of two hundred shekels ; and therefore those who take it in this larger sense, are not forgetful to remind us, that in those days, hair was accounted a very great ornament, and the longer it was, the more it was esteemed ; that Absalom, to be sure, would not fail to nourish his with the utmost care, and to let it grow long enough, because it contributed so much to the gracefulness of his person ; that in after ages (as perhaps they did then) men were wont to use much art with their hair, and dress it every day with fragrant ointments, in order to make it grow thick and strong ; that the noble guards which attended Solomon (as Josephus (*e*) informs us) had their long hair flowing about their shoulders, which they powdered with small particles of gold, to make it sparkle, and glisten against the sun ; and that therefore it is not improbable, that Absalom, who himself was a gay young man, and wanted none of these helps or improvements, might, in process of time, bring his hair up to the weight that the Scripture records, which, according to the gold shekel (that was but half as much as the silver) came to no more (as the learned Bochart endeavours to prove) than three pounds and two ounces.

But since the Scripture says nothing of any such additions, as ointments, or gold-dust, to enhance the weight of the hair ; others, who think this too much for a man that polled his hair once every year, if not oftener, have observed, from the words which we render at *every year's end*, that in the original they imply no particular designation of time ; and thence infer, that Absalom did not weigh his hair so often as once every year, but at this particular time only, when he returned to Jerusalem. " He in his exile," say they, " which lasted about three years, pretending great sorrow for his sin, seems to have taken upon him the vow of a Nazarite, until his return ; one part of which was, that he should not suffer his hair to be cut for such a determined time : but upon his recal home, being now discharged from his vow, he ordered his hair to be cut all clean off, because it was grown very cumbersome to him ;

(*e*) Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 12.

" which

“ which being of so long a growth, amounted to the
 “ weight that the sacred history relates of it.” But this
 notion of Absalom’s Nazaritism has no foundation in
 Scripture, (f) except that lying pretence to his father,
 when, under the cloak of religion, he was minded to con-
 ceal his intended rebellion; and therefore all the super-
 structure built upon it must necessarily fall.

Others, perceiving that none of these inventions would
 answer the purpose, have endeavoured to solve the difficul-
 ty, by attending to the latter words in the text, *two hundred*
shekels after the King’s weight: And, to this purpose, (g)
 they lay it down as a principle, that, during the reigns of
 the kings of Judah, there was no variation in the Hebrew
 weights, nor were there any that were called the *King’s*;
 that the difference between the king’s and the common
 weight did not commence, till after some continuance of
 the Babylonish captivity; that, towards the end of this
 captivity, whoever he was that revised these books of Sa-
 muel, made mention of such weights as were not properly
 Hebrew, but such as (after sixty or seventy years captivity)
 the Jews only knew, and these were the Babylonish; and
 that therefore, when he comes to mention the weight of
 Absalom’s hair, and tells us, that it was two hundred she-
 kels, he adds, (by way of explanation) that it was after the
 king’s weight, *i. e.* after the weight of the King of Baby-
 lon, whose shekel was but the third part of an Hebrew
 shekel, (h) as the best writers upon weights and measures
 are generally agreed. So that, according to this hypothe-
 sis, Absalom’s hair, which weighed two hundred Babylon-
 ish shekels, came but, in our weight, to about thirty-three
 ounces; a quantity which those who deal in that com-
 modity have not unfrequently met with upon several wo-
 men’s heads; and therefore what brings this long contested
 story, at least, within the bounds of a fair probability.

Thus have we attempted to solve most of the remarkable
 difficulties, that either affect the character of David, or
 other parts of Scripture-account, during this period of its
 history; and may now begin to wave the testimony of Hea-
 then authors, in confirmation of what we may think
 strange and unaccountable in the sacred records; because
 facts of that kind will not so frequently occur; and the

(f) 2 Sam. xv. 7. &c. (g) Vide Calmet’s Commentary
 in locum. (h) Ibid.

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

Jewish nation begins now in the reign of King David, to make so considerable a figure, as to have their affairs either mentioned or alluded to, by the most remarkable historians, both Greek and Latin.

DISSERTATION IV.

Of the sacred Chronology, and profane History, during this Period.

Difficulties
in the chro-
nology
cleared.

BEFORE we enter upon the foreign history of this period, it may not be improper to take notice of some chronological difficulties, that are to be found in the Scripture-account of it. The space of time, from the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, to the laying the foundation of the temple at Jerusalem, is so exactly stated, that it will admit of no dispute: For (a) it came to pass, says the text, in the four hundred and fourscore year, after the children of Israel were come up out of the land of Egypt, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that Solomon began to build the house the Lord: But then the manner of computing this number of years has been various.

(b) The generality of the Jews, who make it 450 years from the death of Joshua to the time of Samuel, suppose the difference, from the departure out of Egypt, to the first beginning of the temple, to be 597 years; but this account is 117 more than what we find in Scripture. (c) Josephus expressly tells us, That, when Solomon began that mighty work, it was 592 years from the coming of the Israelites out of Egypt; but then it is presumed, that he (as well as the other Jews) reckons the years of the oppressors apart; whereas they ought to be included in the years of the judges, who delivered the people from that bondage: For it is but looking into the Scripture-account, and we shall see, that (d) before Othniel, Israel was oppressed eight years; before Ehud, eighteen; before Deborah, twenty; before Gideon, seven; before Jephthah, eighteen; and before Samson, forty; now, adding all these together, we shall find, that they amounted to 111 years; which, if

(a) 1 Kings vi. 1.

(b) Bedford's Scripture-chronology,

MS. v. c. 1.

(c) Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2.

(d) Millar's history of the church, c. 1. p. 4.

joined

joined to the years of the judges, will make the particular years of this period far exceed the general: But, by being included in the time assigned for the government of the judges, they make that particular and general account of the years agree very rightly,

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

There is another difference between this account in the first book of Kings, and what the apostle affirms in the Acts of the Apostles, viz. that (e) *after the time that Joshua divided the land to them by lot, God gave them judges for about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet*. But now, if there be 450 years from the division of the land of Canaan (which happened in the seventh year of Joshua's government) to the time of the government, or even of the death of Samuel, there must be many more than 480 years in the whole interval, from the departure out of Egypt, to the building of the Temple.

To solve this difficulty, some have imagined, that the words *μετὰ ταῦτα*, *after that*, which are found in the twentieth verse, should be placed at the beginning of the seventeenth, and then the sense will be, that from God's chusing our fathers, to the time of the judges, were four hundred and fifty years; for from Isaac's birth, say they, to the departure of Israel out of Egypt, are 405 years; they wandered in the wilderness forty years; and the land was divided by lot seven years after that; so that all these put together, make 452 years, which the apostle expresses by the round sum of 450. But this apparently is not the sense of the apostle, who, in his discourse to the people, goes on gradually and methodically thus: *God chose our fathers; he brought them out of Egypt; he led them in the wilderness forty years; he divided the land; and then he gave them judges, &c.* (f) Others therefore have fallen into a different way of computation, by making the years of the judges and oppressors distinct; for, the years of the judges, say they, until Samuel's time, are 339; the years of the tyrants are 111; which, put together, make exactly 450. And this kind of reckoning the apostle might mention, (though he did not entirely approve of it); and therefore we find him introducing it with an *as*, i. e. *after a manner*, or *as some will have it*, who compute the years of the oppressors as distinct from the years of the

(e) Acts xiii. 20. (f) Vide Grotius and Usher.

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1655, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

judges, though, in reality, they ought to be included in one another.

There is still a farther difficulty, which arises from comparing the scripture-chronology, with the genealogies in the book of Ruth. From the entrance into the land of Canaan, to the building of the temple, were 440 years: Now if, out of this, we subtract for David's life seventy years, and for that part of Solomon's reign which was before the foundation of the temple, four years, the remainder will be 366; and yet, for these three hundred and sixty-six years, we have four generations only, (for Salmon begat Boaz of Rahab; Boaz begat Obed of Ruth; Obed begat Jesse; and Jesse begat David), which at a time (g) when the age of man was reduced to the compass of seventy or eighty years, is a thing almost impossible. But, as it is not certain, that the lives of all men were shortened at the time, when the Israelites murmured in the wilderness, forasmuch as the reason for cutting them off so soon (even to prevent their entering into the land of promise) was peculiar to that generation, and might not affect others; so the lives of others might be extended much longer, until the days David, and especially in that family, which God had honoured so highly as to appoint, that in it his blessed Son should be born.

(h) According to this account, we may suppose that Salmon might be about twenty years old when he entered into Canaan, and Rahab, whom he married, to be about the same age; and that Rahab might bear Boaz in the sixty-second year of her age, which, in those days, was no extraordinary thing: And then, it is but supposing farther, that Boaz was an hundred and two years old before he begat Obed; Obed an hundred and eleven before he begat Jesse; and Jesse of the same age before he begat David; and the whole difficulty is removed: Only it may be thought a little strange, that men, above an hundred years old, should be capable of begetting children, until it be considered, that Moses and Aaron, and Joshua and Caleb, were all vigorous men at this age; that, long after this, Jehoiada, the high-priest, was an hundred and thirty years old when he died; and that, almost in our own remembrance, our countryman, Thomas Parr, lived to an hundred and

(g) Psal. xc. 10. (h) Bedford's Scripture-chronology. lib. v. c. 1.; and Millar's Church-history, chap. 1. period 4.

fifty-two, and had a son when he was an hundred and five years old.

This may suffice for settling the chronology; and now to proceed to the history of this period. Our last connection of the sacred and profane history we concluded with the life and adventures of Sesostris, who reigned in Egypt, and made a very distinguished figure in several parts of the world, while the Israelites were sojourning in the wilderness; but, from the time that they entered into Canaan, * they seem to have had no intercourse with the Egyptians, nor do their several histories at all interfere.

All history, indeed, in this period of time, is so defaced and corrupted with fables, that it is a hard matter to discern any lineaments of truth in it; and yet it may not be amiss to take notice of some of its remarkable events.

About the thirty ninth year of Ehud's government in Israel, (in the time of Deucalion son of Prometheus), there happened such a deluge in Thessaly, as gave (i) the poets an occasion to say, that all mankind was therein destroyed, and that Deucalion, and Pyrrha his wife, reseeded the world by throwing stones behind them, which were instantly changed into men and women.

A. M.
2949, &c.
Ant. Chris.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

The profane history of this period.

Of Deucalion.

* We have formerly taken notice lib. iii. cap. 5. in the notes) of the series of Egyptian kings, written by Eratosthenes, and preserved by Syncellus; and here to proceed with that catalogue: In the year of the world 2523, reigned in Egypt Echesias Charas on year. In the year 2524, began Nitocris, and reigned six years. In the year 2530, began Myrris, and reigned twenty years. In the year 2552, Thyosimares, (the same that Herodotus calls Myris, or Myrios), and reigned twelve years. In the year 2564, began Thyrrillus, and reigned eight years. In the year 2572, began Semiphucares, and reigned eighteen years. In the year 2590, began Chuter Taurus, and reigned seven years. In the year 2597, began Cheres Philosophus, and reigned twelve years. In the year 2609, began Chomo Ephtha, and reigned eleven years. In the year 2620, began Anchurius Ochus, and reigned sixty years. In the year 2680, began Penteatherus, and reigned sixteen years. In the year 2696, began Stamenes, and reigned twenty-three years. In the year 2719, began Sifstichemes, and reigned fifty-five years. In the year 2774, began Maris, and reigned forty-three years. In the year 2817, began Siphous Hermes, — In the year 2836, began Phruron, or Nilus. — In the year 2843, began Amurhæus, and reigned sixty-three years, or to the year of the world 2906. Vide Millar's Church-history, chap. i. period 4.

(i) Ovid's Metamorphosis, lib. i. fab. 7

A. M. 2949, *etc.* Much about this time lived Phaëton, a prince of the
 Ant. Christ. 1055, *etc.* Ligurians, and a great astrologer, that applied himself
 chiefly to the study of the course of the sun; and because,
 from 2 Sam. i to xix. in his days, the country of Italy, near the river Po, was so
 incommoded with extraordinary heats, that the earth be-
 came dry, and barren for several years, (k) it hence be-
 came a renowned fable among the poets, that by his mis-
 guidance of the horses of the sun, (who is said to have
 been his father), he set the earth on fire.

Ganymede. About the fourteenth year of Tolah's judging Israel,
 Ganymede, the son of Tros king of Phrygia, being beloved
 by Jupiter, (as the poets fable), was by him carried up to
 heaven in the shape of an eagle, and, much against Juno's
 will, made cup-bearer to the gods.

Perseus. About the sixth year of Jair's government, Perseus ap-
 peared in the world, and of him the fabulous writers have
 many strange stories; as, that he was begot by Jupiter on
 Danaë, in a golden shower; that when he came to be of
 age, he conquered the Gorgons, with their queen Medusa,
 whose hair was interwoven with snakes; that he subdued
 the inhabitants of mount Atlas, and first delivered Andro-
 meda, by killing the sea-monster sent to devour her, and
 then married her; that afterwards he fought against the
 kings of Mauritania and Æthiopia, and returning to
 Greece, overcame his uncle Proetus, and Polydectes king
 of the island Seriphus.

The Argo- Few things are more famous, in the songs of the poets,
 nauts; than the expedition of those valiant Greeks that accompa-
 nied Jason to Colchos; and the foundation of the story is
 conceived to be this:—That the Argonauts sailed to
 some part of Scythia, to carry off a share of the riches of
 that country, where the inhabitants gained a great deal of
 gold out of the rivers that ran from mount Caucasus, by
 using sheep-skins with the wool on, in order to take up
 that precious metal, from whence it was called the
 golden-fleece. But the poets, out of their fruitful brains,
 have made large additions to the story, viz. that Jason
 fell in love with Hypsipyle at Lemnos; and that at Colchos
 he married Medea, the king's daughter, who, being a
 famous witch, taught him how to kill the dragon, that
 kept the rich fleece; how to conquer the bulls, that vom-
 ited fire; and how to sow the serpent's teeth, out of

(k) Ibid. lib. ii. Fab. i.

which there arose an army of men ; with many more fictions of the like nature.

But, of all the occurrences in this period, that which has been most celebrated by the poets is the siege of Troy ; and the probable occasion of it is supposed to be this :

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1055, etc.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

Not long before this remarkable event happened, the seas were very much infested with pirates, who, landing on the shores, seized upon all the women and cattle they could meet with ; and so carrying them off, either sold them in some distant country, or kept them for their own use. Hereupon Tyndareus, the father of Helena, considering the beauty of his daughter, caused all her lovers (who were some of the principal men of Greece) to bind themselves by a solemn oath, that, if at any time she should be taken from her husband, they would join all their forces together to recover her : And so, being left to chuse whom she would have for her husband, she made choice of Menelaus king of Mycenæ, and brother to Agamemnon. Paris, one of the youngest sons of Priamus, king of Troy, upon the report of her beauty, came into Greece to see her, and was kindly entertained by Menelaus ; but he soon took an opportunity to debauch his wife ; and, having robbed the husband of a great deal of treasure, found means to make his escape both with her and it.

and the
siege of
Troy.

Menelaus (as soon as his wife was gone, complained of the injury that had been done him, to all the Grecian princes, and required the performance of their oath ; which they readily consented to, and made his brother Agamemnon general of the forces, that were to be employed in this expedition. The Greeks, however, being unwilling to enter into a war, if matters could be accommodated by a treaty, sent Ulysses, and some others, as ambassadors to Troy, to demand Helena, and all the things of value that were taken with her. What answer the Trojans made to this demand, we are no where informed ; but sure it is, that the ambassadors returned back, so very much offended with their ill treatment, that, in a short time, they fitted out a vast armament.

But there was an unhappy accident, which mightily retarded the siege of the city, and that was a difference which fell out between Agamemnon and Achilles. Agamemnon, as general had the pre-option of what part of the booty he pleased, and had then taken to himself a captive woman, the daughter of Chryses, the priest of Apollo, as

A. M.
2949, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1055, &c.
from 2 Sam.
i. to xix.

Achilles, and the other commanding officers, had made choice of others; but, being obliged to give up the priest's daughter, in atonement for the pestilence that was fallen upon the army, he sent and took Achilles's captive from him, which so exasperated this gallant warrior, that, to revenge himself effectually, he took up a resolution neither to fight himself nor suffer any forces under him to engage; and this gave the enemy so great an advantage, that Hector, at the head of his forces, broke through the Grecian trenches one day, and set fire to the ships.

In the midst of this extremity, Patroclus the bosom-friend of Achilles, not being able to stand neuter any longer, begged of Achilles to let him have the use of his armour, and the command of his troops, in order to repulse the Trojans; which he bravely attempted, but, in the engagement, fell by the hands of Hector, who took from him the arms of Achilles, and carried them off.

This conjuncture Agamemnon made use of to be reconciled to Achilles; and to this purpose, sent him back his captive maid, with many very valuable presents, and made an excuse for his former behaviour as well as he could. Achilles, in order to be revenged for the loss of his friend, laid aside all resentment, and joined the Greeks in the next battle, wherein he vanquished the Trojans; and, singling out Hector, never left pursuing him, wherever he went, until he had killed him. * With Hector fell the city, which was

* Homer indeed gives us this account of the taking of Troy: but Virgil has informed us, that it was done by a large wooden horse, in which were inclosed several of the chief commanders of the Greeks; that the rest sailing to the island of Tenedos, left Sinon to persuade the Trojans, that this horse was built upon a religious account, and was necessary for them to take into the city; that, by his craft and instigation, they pulled down part of the wall for that purpose; and so the Greeks returning on a sudden, and entering the breach, opened the horse, seized on the gates, and burnt the city. But another author, who perhaps might know the truth as well as Virgil, gives us a different account of this matter, viz. that Æneas, Antenor, and Polydamus, having taken some disgust at king Priamus, agreed with the Grecians to betray the city to them, upon condition that they might retire with their men wherever they thought fit, provided they settled not in Phrygia. To this purpose it was concerted, that the Grecians should set sail the day before to the island Tenedos, as if they were quite gone, but return in the dark of the night, when the Trojans thought

was soon reduced to ashes, and its inhabitants forced to undergo a military execution.

But, how severe soever the Greeks might be to their conquered enemies, several historians have observed, that in their return home, they suffered almost as much misery as they had brought upon the Trojans. For this is the account which Thucydides gives of them. "By reason of their long absence, they found many alterations when they returned, so that some of them were driven by their neighbours from their ancient seats; many were expelled their countries by faction; others slain, soon after their arrival, and others deposed from their kingdoms by such as had staid at home." Nestor and Pyrrhus got safe home indeed, but were slain by Orestes. Idomeneus and Philoctetes, upon their return, were soon driven away to seek for new habitations. Agamemnon was, upon his first arrival, slain by his wife, and her adulterer Ægisthus; who had usurped his kingdom. Menelaus, having long wandered upon the sea, was forced into Egypt, before he could return to Sparta. Ulysses, after ten years peregrination, and the loss of his whole company, came home in a poor condition, and had much difficulty to recover the mastership of his own house. Ajax, the son of Oileus, was drowned; Teucer fled into Cyprus; and Diomedes to King Daunus. Some of the Locrians were driven into Africa, others into Italy, others into Sicily, and settled themselves in such numbers in these parts, that Greek became the current language of this island, and most of the east part of Italy obtained the name of *Magna Græcia*.

Thus the wise ruler of the world was pleased to make one wicked nation the instrument of punishing another: But, whatever they severally offered, the succeeding generations obtained this advantage by it,—That the dispersion of the Greeks occasioned a fuller peopling of distant countries, by an accession of these new inhabitants: and the taking of Troy became, in some years, the settled epocha, whereby all that were acquainted with the story of it, might agree in their account of time.

thought themselves secure, and so be let in at the Scæan-gate, over which was a large image of an horse, which gave the first rise and occasion to all this story.

C H A P. V.

From the Death of Absalom, to the Building of the Temple.

The HISTORY.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kingsviii.

AS soon as David was informed of his son's death, all the joy of the victory was turned into sorrow. The king himself withdrew to a † private apartment, where he vented his grief in such a † mournful exclamation,

David's
grief for the
loss of his
son Absa-
lom.

† The place to which David withdrew, in order to vent his grief, was (as Josephus tells us, lib. vii. c. 10.) to the top of one of the highest towers in the city; but the sacred history calls it *the chamber over the gate*, ii. Sam. xviii. 33. For the gate was spacious, and much of the same form with the *forum* among the Romans, not only the market of all commodities, but the place where all great assemblies of the people were likewise held. There were several buildings, where the chief magistrates sat to administer justice, Ruth. iv. 1, 2.; and where the other affairs of the state were transacted; so that it is not improbable, that this chamber over the gate, where David went to weep, might be some withdrawing-room in the place where the privy-council was wont to meet; *Patrick's Comment.*

† Nothing certainly can be more moving and pathetic, than the words which David utters upon this sad occasion; but whether it was David's deliberate wish, that he had died in Absalom's stead, or only the effect of his excessive love and grief for him, is not so easy a matter to determine. St. Austin seems to be on the affirmative side, and gives this reason for it:—That Absalom died impenitent, but might have lived to become a better man; whereas, if David had died, he had reason to hope well of his salvation: But this supposition (as I take it) is not so well founded, since there is much more probability, that if Absalom had survived his father, he would have grown more profligate than ever, triumphed in his good success; insulted and persecuted all his father's friends; and proved a wicked and an abominable tyrant. But whether David's wish was deliberate or no, it is certain that his grief might be increased from this reflection, that himself, by his own sin in the case of Uriah, had been the unhappy instrument and occasion of his son's death; though some learned men have observed, that the oriental people were accustomed to express their passions with more vehemence than we, in these parts of the world,

are

tion, as this : (a) *O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee ! O Absalom, my son, my son !* And as for the army, instead of returning in triumph, they stole silently into the city, as if they had done amiss, and had lost, instead of gaining the battle.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix, to
1 Kingsviii.

This Joab perceiving, and being sensible that such excessive grief, at this juncture of affairs, would be of great prejudice to the king, went boldly in to him, and * expostulated the matter with him in terms that might perhaps be necessary on that occasion, but did not so well become a subject's mouth. However, they had this good effect upon the king, that they roused him from his melancholy, and made him appear in public, to the great satisfaction of all his loyal subjects ; but as he thought himself very insolently used by Joab, upon several occasions, from that time he made it his resolution to take the first opportunity of † dismissing him from being his general.

Those

are wont to do ; and that the repetition of the same word, (*My son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son !*), is a style proper for mournful lamentations.

—Daphninque tuum tollemus ad astra,

Daphnin ad astra feremus, amavit nos quoque Daphnis.

Virg. Eccl. v.

"Αἰαζω τὸν Ἀδωνιν, ἀπώλετο καλὸς Ἀδωνις

Ὡλετὸς καλὸς Ἀδωνις.

Bion. Id. I.

Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.

(a) 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

* Josephus concludes the speech which he supposes Joab to have made to David upon this occasion, in words to this effect : —“ Pray, Sir, does not your conscience, as well as your honour, reprove you for this intemperate tenderness for the memory of so implacable an enemy ? He was your son, it is true, but a most ungracious one ; and you cannot be just to God's providence, without acknowledging the blessing of his being taken away. Let me entreat you therefore to shew yourself cheerful to your people, and let them know, that it is to their loyalty and bravery that you are indebted for the honour of the day ; for if you go on, as you have begun, your kingdom, and your army, will most infallibly be put into other hands, and you will then find something else to cry for ; *Jewish Antiq. lib. vii. c. 10.*

† For he had sufficient reason to think of depressing a man, who was grown so insufferably insolent and imperious. He had slain Abner most perfidiously in cool blood ; had killed Absalom against the king's express command ; in his late bold reproof had insulted over his sorrow, and (if we may believe Josephus) threatened to de-

pole

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

His return
to Jerusa-
lem, and by
whom he
was met,
and con-
ducted
home.

Those of his subjects, who had appeared in arms against him, being now made sensible of the folly of their rebellion, became the forwardest for his restoration; but (what grieved him much) his own tribe, the tribe of Judah, seemed a little indifferent as to the matter; which made him send to Zadock and Abiathar the chief-priests, not only to remind them of their own duty, but to authorise them likewise to treat with Amasa, (who, though he had commanded Absalom's army, was still a man of great authority in the tribe), to offer him his pardon, and in case he would come fully into his interest, to promise him the generalship in the room of Joab.

Thus, all things conspiring to his happy restoration, the king left Mahanaim, and set forward on his journey to Jerusalem, when the chiefs of the tribe of Judah came to meet, and conduct him over the Jordan. Old Barzillai, who had been very kind to the king in his exile, and supplied him with provisions while he continued at Mahanaim, hearing that he was upon his return, came to take his leave of him, and see him safe over the river; and when the king, in gratitude for his kindness, gave him an invitation to go with him to Jerusalem, the good old man modestly excused himself, upon the account of his age, as having now lost the relish of the pleasures of a court, and desired rather to retire to his own estate, where he might spend the remainder of his days in quiet: but as he had a son, whose age was more proper to attend him, if his Majesty would be pleased to confer any favour on him, the obligation would be the same; † which David promised to do, and so, with much mutual blessings and salutations, they parted.

Among the many others who came to meet David upon this occasion, Shimei the Benjamite, who not long before

pose him, and give his kingdom to another. To such a height of arrogance will ministers sometimes arrive, when they find that their service is become necessary to their prince! *Patrick's Commentary.*

† What David did for Chimham is uncertain; but as he had a patrimony in Bethlehem, which was the place of his nativity, it is not improbable, that he gave a great part of it to Chimham, and his heirs for ever; and that this was afterwards called *the habitation of Chimham* in the days of Jeremiah, Jer. xli. 17.; *Bedford's Scripture chronology, lib. v. c. 4.*

had loaded him with curses and imprecations, came, † with a thousand men of his tribe, to beg pardon for his fault; and, when Abishai would have persuaded the king to have him killed, he repented the motion, as an indignity put upon himself: And, being unwilling to eclipse the public joy with the blood of any one, gave him his royal word and oath that he should live.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

Another remarkable person, that came to wait upon David at this time, was the perfidious Ziba, with his fifteen sons and twenty servants. He had again imposed upon his master, and, when he ordered him to make ready his ass, that he, among others, might go and meet the king, slid away himself to make his court first; so that Mephibosheth, being lame, was forced to stay at Jerusalem, (where he had all along * mourned for the king's absence), until the king arrived; But, when he was admitted into his presence, and the king seemed to be angry with him for not having accompanied him in his exile, he charged this

† The reason why Shimei came with so large a retinue, was to let David see that he was a man of some considerable rank, and capable of doing him great service among the people, which might be some inducement to the king to grant him his pardon; or, very likely, he was one of the captains of a thousand in his own tribe, and might carry them all along with him, to make the stronger intercession for his pardon; *Pool's Annotations*.

* The words in the text are, that *he had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his cloaths, from the day that the king departed*, 2 Sam. xix. 24. These were some of the instances wherein the Jews were wont to express their mourning; and they are here mentioned by the historian, as evidences of the falsehood of Ziba's information against his master, since no one, who neglected himself to this degree, could be supposed ambitious of a crown. Not dressing his feet, may signify either not cutting his toe-nails, or his not washing his feet, which the Jews were accustomed very frequently to do, because of the bad smell which was natural to them, as well as the Arabians, and some other nations; and therefore his omission of this could not but make him offensive to himself. Not trimming his beard was letting its hair grow negligently, and without any order. For the manner of the Jews was, to cut the hair from the lip upwards, and what grew likewise on the cheek; but what was on the chin, and so backwards to the ear, that they suffered to grow; and not washing his cloaths must denote his putting on no clean linen, but wearing the same shirt all the while; *Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

A. M. seeming neglect upon the perfidy of his servant, and * set
 2981, etc. his case in so fair a light, that the king revoked the hasty
 Ant. Christ. grant he had made in favour of Ziba, and put his estate
 1023, etc. upon the same foot of possession that it was before.

xix to When David was passed the Jordan, he was willing to
 1 Kings viii. make all possible haste to Jerusalem; and, as the tribe of Ju-
 Sheba's re- bellion, dah was the first that came to conduct him home, he (very
 and upon probably to gratify them) marched on without waiting for
 what occa- the great men of Israel, who, in all parts of the kingdom,
 sion, were making ready to join him. This occasioned some hot
 disputes between the princes of Israel and those of Judah :
 And, as the king was loth to displease either party, and
 therefore did not care to intermeddle in the controversy, se-
 veral of the tribes of Israel took an outward umbrage at
 this, which occasioned a fresh insurrection. Sheba, a Ben-
 jamite, and not unlikely one of Saul's family, made pu-
 blic proclamation, by the sound of trumpet, that " since
 " the tribe of Judah had engrossed David to themselves,
 " they might e'en take him ; and, since all the other tribes
 " he had visibly deserted, their wisest way would be to
 " stand to their arms, and in like manner desert him." Whereupon a great many of the other tribes followed She-
 ba ; but the men of Judah persisted in their loyalty, and
 conducted the king to Jerusalem. As soon as he arrived in
 the city, the first thing he did was to declare Amasa his
 general, and to order him to get together a sufficient body

* Josephus brings in Mephibosheth pleading his excuse to David for not attending him, and expressing a grateful sense of his favours, in such like words as these :—Nor has he only disappointed me in the
 " exercise of my duty, but has been doing me spiteful offices to
 " your Majesty likewise : but you, Sir, are so just, and so great a
 " lover of God and truth, that I am sure your generosity and wis-
 " dom will never entertain a calumny to my prejudice. Our family
 " has had the experience of your piety, modesty, and goodness, to a
 " degree never to be forgotten, in passing over, and pardoning, the
 " innumerable hazards and persecutions that you were exposed to,
 " in the days, and by the contrivance, of my grandfather, when
 " all our lives were forfeited, in your power, and at your mercy.
 " But then, after all this gracious tenderness, your superadding the
 " honour of taking me to your table, (a person so obnoxious in re-
 " gard of my relations), as a friend, and as a guest, nothing could
 " be either greater, or more obliging, than this ;" *Jewish Antiq.*
lib. vii. c. 7.

of forces, as fast as he could, to pursue after Sheba. † A-
 mafa, however found more difficulty in executing this or-
 der than was expected; which when David understood,
 he sent Abishai with his guards (for he was resolved not to
 employ his brother Joab any more) in quest of Sheba, un-
 til Amasa, with the rest of the army, could join him. Ex-
 asperated at this, Joab, without any order, went along with
 his brother; and when Amasa came up with them, (which
 was at Gibeon), and was going to take upon him the com-
 mand of the whole army, he advanced, with all seeming
 friendliness, to salute him; but when he came within
 reach, he * took him by the beard, and stabbed him to
 the heart; and so, leaving him to wallow in his blood,
 proclaimed himself general in chief, and taking the army
 with him, pursued after Sheba, † leaving orders for the
 forces, that were coming up, to follow after.

A. M.
 2981, &c.
 Ant. Christ.
 1023, &c.
 from 2 Sam.
 xix. to
 1 Kings viii.
 Joab stabs
 Amasa
 basely,
 and makes
 himself ge-
 neral, and
 suppresses
 Sheba's re-
 bellion.

Sheba

† The people, having been harassed in the late civil war, were
 not perhaps so forward to engage in another. Some of them might
 not like to serve under a man, who had lately headed a rebellious
 army against the king, and others might have conceived so high an
 opinion of Joab, as not easily to be brought to serve under any other
 general. Any of these things might very well retard Amasa's re-
 cruits, and yet he might be loth to make such a report to the king,
 for fear that it might diminish his authority, and make him appear
 not so well qualified for the office wherein he had placed him; *Pa-
 trick's Commentary.*

* It was an ancient custom among the Grecians, to take the per-
 son, to whom they had any address to make, by the chin, or beard:
Antiquis Græciæ in supplicando mentum attingere mos erat, says
 Pliny, lib. xi. c. 45.; and even to this day, the Turks, in their sa-
 lutations, do very frequently take one another by the beard, (*vide*
Thevenot's travels, c. 22). The Arabians have a great regard to
 the beard: The wives kiss their husband's, and the children their
 fathers beards, when they come to salute them; and, when two
 friends meet together, their custom is, in the course of their compli-
 ments, to interchange kisses in this manner, (*vide* *Darvieux coutumes*
des Arabes, c. 7.), as the like custom is still preserved among the
 eastern people, the Indians, who take one another by the chin when
 they would give an hearty salute, and say *Bobba*, i. e. *Father*, or
Bii, *Brother*, as the author of the voyage to the East-Indies relates.
Vide Peter de Valles's travels.

† So insolent was Joab become, upon the presumption that
 David durst not punish him, that as he ventured upon this bloody
 fact, so he imagined, that though the sight of Amasa's dead body
 might

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

Sheba had gone about all the tribes of Israel to see if he could prevail with them to take up arms, against David ; but finding very few, that, upon second thoughts, were willing to engage in his measures, he was forced at last, with the few forces he had got together, to shut himself up in Abel, a fortified town in the tribe of Naphtali, in the northern part of Judea : But Joab was soon at his heels, and having besieged the town, and battered the walls, was making preparations for an assault, when † a woman of great prudence called to the besiegers from off the walls, and desired to speak with their general. When Joab was come within hearing, the woman addressed herself to him in a very handsome manner, and told him, “ That † by a “ long prescription of time, it had always been a custom, “ founded

might stop the march of those that came by it, yet upon its being given out that he was again become their general, their love for him was such, that they would not scruple to follow him; *Pat. Com.*

† It seems not unlikely, that this woman was a governess in this city ; that though that office was most commonly occupied by men, yet there want not instances of women, (as in the case of Deborah, Jud. iv. 4. And Queen Athaliah. 2 Kings xi), who have been employed in the administration of civil affairs. If she was invested with any such authority, she was the properest person to desire a parley with the general ; and reason good she had to desire it, because she knew the present temper and fear of the citizens and soldiers, viz. that considering the imminent danger they were in, they were generally desirous of peace, and restrained from it only by Sheba's power and authority; *Pool's Annotations.*

† In the beginning of this woman's speech to Joab, there is something that seems both abrupt and obscure. *They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They should surely ask counsel at Abel, and so they ended the matter,* 2 Sam. xx. 18. according to this translation the sense of the words is,——“ This city, which thou art about to “ destroy, is no mean and contemptible one, but so honourable and “ considerable for its wisdom, and the wise people in it, that when “ any difference did arise among any of the neighbouring places, “ they used proverbially to say, *We will ask the opinion and advice “ of the men of Abel about it, and we will stand to their arbitra- “ tion ; and so all parties were satisfied, and disputes ended :* So that her words, according to this sense, are an high commendation of the city of Abel, for its being a place (time out of mind) very eminent for the wisdom and prudence of its inhabitants. But there is another translation in the margin of our Bibles, which seems to be

“founded (b) on the law of God, whenever the Hebrews
 “came before any city, to offer peace in the first place,
 “even though the inhabitants were of another nation;
 “much more then ought this to have been done to a peo-
 “ple, that were all of the same blood, and the greatest
 “part of them loyal subjects to the king.” To which
 Joab replied, “That he had no ill design against the peo-
 “ple of the city, only as they harboured a rebel and a
 “traitor, whom he demanded of them:” Whereupon the
 woman persuaded the inhabitants to cut off Sheba’s head,
 and throw it over the wall, which when they had done, Joab
 raised the siege, and withdrew with his army to Jerusalem;
 where his services, upon this occasion, were thought to be
 such, that the king found himself obliged to restore him to
 his post of captain-general.

A. M.
 2981, etc.
 Ant. Christ.
 1023, etc.
 from 2 Sam.
 xix. to
 1 Kings viii.

Not long after this, there happened a fore famine in the
 land, and the long continuance of it (which was for three
 years) made David suspect that it did not proceed from any
 common cause, but was inflicted by the immediate hand of
 God; and when he consulted the divine oracle to know the
 occasion of it, he was given to understand, that Saul’s
 cruelty to the Gibeonites, in slaying so many, contrary to
 the treaty then depending between him and them, was the
 cause of it. Hereupon David sent to the Gibeonites, to
 know † what satisfaction they desired; and when he was
 told, that they expected seven of Saul’s posterity to be de-

A famine
 for Saul’s
 slaughter of
 the Gibeon-
 ites remo-
 ved.

more natural, and makes the woman speak in this manner :——
 “When the people saw thee lay siege to the city, they said, *Sure-*
 “*ly he will ask, if we will have peace; for the law prescribes, that*
 “*he should offer peace to strangers, much more then to Israelitish*
 “*cities; and if he would once do this, we should soon bring things*
 “*to an amicable agreement; for we are peaceable people, and*
 “*faithful to our prince.*” So that, according to this interpretation,
 the woman both modestly reproved Joab for the neglect of his duty,
 and artfully engaged him in the performance of it; *Patrick’s Com-*
mentary; and Pool’s Annotations.

(b) Deut. xx. 10.

† This may seem strange, unless we suppose, (as Josephus does)
 that when David consulted God, he told him, not only for what
 crime it was that he sent this punishment, but that he should take
 such a revenge for it as the Gibeonites should desire: And there
 was this farther reason for humouring the Gibeonites herein, because
 they had been modest under their sufferings, and never made any
 complaint to David of the injuries that had been done them; *Pa-*
trick’s Commentary.

livered

A. M. 2981, etc.
 Ant. Christ.
 1023, etc.
 from 2 Sam.
 xix. to
 1 Kings viii.

livered to them, he complied with their demand, and sent two sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, and † five of Merab, his eldest daughter, but spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan for the love which he had for his father when alive. These seven the Gibeonites took, and hung upon gibbets; and there they intended them to hang, † until God should send rain upon the earth, for the want of this occasioned the famine: But Rizpah, being informed of this, had a tent made of sackcloth (pitched near the place) for her to live in, that so, by the help of her servants, she might * keep watch day and night, to fright away the birds and beasts from doing any hurt to the dead bodies. It was not long however, before God sent plentiful showers of rain, so that Rizpah had the liberty to take down the bodies: And, when David was informed of this her pious care, he was moved thereby to take up the bones of Saul, and Jonathan his son, who, for five and thirty years before, had been buried under a tree at Jabesh-Gi-

† Michal is put in the text indeed, 2 Sam. xxi. 8. but not by mistake, as some will have it; for though Michal was not the wife of Adrial, but Merab; yet those children which Merab had by Adriel, Michal brought up; and the Jews observe, upon this occasion, that whoever brings up a pupil in his house, is in Scripture said to have begotten him. Nor is it in Scripture only, that this form of expression takes place, but in Heathen authors likewise. For Agememnon and Menelaus are called *sons of Atreus*, because Plishtenes (who was their father) being dead, he took care to bring them up; *Howell's History*, in the notes; and *Patrick's Commentary*.

† It was a positive law to the Israelites, Deut. xxi. 22, 23. that if any man was hanged, he should be buried before night; but the Gibeonites, being not of that nation, thought themselves not obliged by that law. They are remarked indeed to have been a remnant of the Amorites, (2 Sam. xxi. 2.), and among them (as some have imagined) it was a barbarous custom in those days, (as it certainly prevailed in after-ages), to hang up men, in order to appease the anger of the gods in time of famine; *Patrick's* and *Calmet's Com.*

* It is an obvious remark from hence, that crosses and gibbets, whereon malefactors were executed, did not stand high from the ground, since the dead bodies of such were in danger of being torn by carnivorous creatures; and what we may farther observe is, that it was an ancient custom for the relations of such as were thus executed, to watch their dead bodies. Thus Homer (*Iliad* xxiii. mentions Venus, as taking care of Hector's body; and the story of the Ephesian matron every one can tell; *Calmet's Commentary*.

lead),

lead), and, together with these seven sufferers of the same family, gave them an honourable interment in the tomb of Kish, the father of Saul, at Zelah, in the country of Benjamin.

David, in the beginning of his reign, had so humbled the Philistines, that they were not able to bring any great numbers into the field; but still, as long as they had men among them of a gigantic stature, and such as were fit to be their champions, they did not cease to disturb the peace of Israel, insomuch that David, in the latter end of his reign, had four engagements with them: In the first of which, himself had like to have been slain by one of these monstrous large men, had not Abishai come timely in to his aid, and killed the Philistine; upon which occasion, it was unanimously agreed in the army, that the king should never more go into the battle, lest a † life so precious should be lost.

In the other three engagements, nothing remarkable happened, but the death of four of these huge men, by the hands of some of David's chief officers; except we may mention here another valiant act, † which might probably be done at this time.

The Philistines army lay in the valley of Rephaim, between David's camp and Bethlehem, where they had likewise a garrison: But notwithstanding this, upon David's

† The expression is very beautiful, and significant, in the text, *Thou shalt no more go out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel*, 2 Sam. xxi. 17. For good Kings are in Scripture justly called the light of the people, (1 Kings:xi. 36. and Psal. cxxxii. 17.), because the beauty and glory, the conduct and direction, the comfort, and safety, and welfare of a people, depend upon them, and are derived from them; *Pool's Annotations*.

† It is commonly observed, by the Jewish commentators, that though David expressed a desire for some of the water of Bethlehem, because it was the place of his nativity, and the water not improbably very excellent in its kind, yet he did not do this with any intent, that any should venture their lives to fetch him it. In this action, however, they have remarked three wonderful things, viz. That three men could break through the whole host of the Philistines; and when they had so done, durst stay to draw water out of the well, and then carry it away; with an high hand, through the same host to David: But they might have added a fourth remark, viz. That they attempted this at the gate of Bethlehem, where a garrison of the Philistines kept a strong guard; *Patrick's Commem.*

A. M. 2981, &c. Ant. Christ. 1023, &c. from 2 Sam. xix. to 1 Kings viii. intimating a desire to have some of the water of Bethlehem: three of his chief captains broke through the enemies camp, and having drawn some water out of the well, brought it to David; but he, understanding at what price it had been purchased, even at the hazard of all their lives, would not drink it, but offered it to the Lord.

A pestilence, for David's numbering the people, removed.

About two years before David's death, (whatever might be the occasion of it), so it was, that he was desirous to know the number of his people, and accordingly, gave his chief officers orders to go through the whole kingdom, and bring him an account of all the people. Joab endeavoured to remonstrate against it, in a manner more modest than was customary with him; but the king's orders were positive; and therefore Joab, with other officers to assist him, beginning on the east side of Jordan, came round by the north parts of Canaan, and returned to Jerusalem, at the end of nine months and twenty days, with an estimate, that in Israel there were eight hundred thousand men fit to bear arms, and five hundred thousand in Judah; but of the men that belonged to the tribes of Levi and Benjamin there was no list given in.

David

|| The words in the text are,——*And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah,* 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. But in the original there is no nominative case at all. We find it however supplied in 1 Chron. xxi. 1. where it is said, that *Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel:* But then, by the word *Satan*, there is no necessity why we should understand the devil properly so called, because any evil minister, or counsellor, that advised David to number the people, will answer the signification of the word as well: And that there was some such counsellor, who prompted David to this action, seems to be implied in these words of Joab:——*Now the Lord thy God add unto the people (how many soever they be) an hundred fold, and that the eyes of my Lord the King may see it; but why doth my Lord the king delight in this thing?* 2 Sam. xxiv. 3. Whereby it seems plain, that the matter had been debated in the king's council before, and that, tho' Joab was one who opposed it, David was more influenced by the persuasion of some other; *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

|| If we compare this account with what we meet with in 1 Chron. xxi. 5. we shall find a great difference; for there the men of Israel are said to be three hundred thousand more than they are here, and, on the other hand, the men of Judah are said to be thirty

David had no sooner received the account, but his heart misgave him, that he had done wrong; and it was not long before the prophet Gad was sent to bring his sin to remembrance, and to offer him the choice of three punishments, || famine, pestilence, or war, which he liked best. A. M. 2581, etc.
Ant. Chris. 1023, &c.
from 2 Sam. xix. to 1 Kings viii.

Where every punishment was so destructive, it was hard to tell which to prefer; but David at last made choice of the pestilence; which accordingly was sent, and, in || a very short time, destroyed no less than seventy thousand men.

thirty thousand less; But as for the former difference, it is but supposing, that in this account recorded in Samuel, the standing legions (which amounted in all to two hundred and eighty-eight thousand, *i. e.* twenty-four thousand with their officers, upon guard every month) are not here mentioned, tho' they be in Chronicles: And as to the latter difference, it is but adding twenty-four thousand legionary soldiers to the tribe of Judah, and the difficulty is removed: Tho' some are apt to think, that in this case, there is no need of this supposition, because, it is a common thing in Scripture to mention a round sum, either of men or years, tho' upon a strict computation, there may be some wanting; *Patrick's Commentary.*

|| There is another difference in this account, and what we meet with in the book of Chronicles. There the famine is said to be for three years only, but here it is said to be for seven. The Septuagint indeed make it no more than three; and for this reason some have imagined, that the seven is an error crept into the text, especially considering that three years of famine agree better with three days pestilence, and three months flight before an enemy. But there is no reason to suppose any error in the text; it is but saying, that in Chronicles, the author speaks of those years of famine which were to come for David's sin only, but in Samuel of those three years of famine likewise, which were sent for Saul's sin, 2 Sam. xxi. Now, within one year after the famine that was sent for Saul's sin, was David's sin in numbering the people; the intermediate year then was either the Sabbatical year, wherein the people were not allowed to sow nor reap, or a year of such excessive drought, that the crop came to little or nothing. Upon either of these accounts we may properly enough say, that there were four years of famine before, and three more being now added to them, make up the seven that are here mentioned; *Pool's Annot.*

|| The words in the text are;—*So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel; from the morning, even to the time appointed.* The time appointed was the space of three days; and therefore some are of opinion, that the plague lasted so long; but then others urge, that this does not agree with what follows. *viz.* that

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

men. The plague began in the extreme parts of the kingdom, but every moment made advances nearer and nearer to Jerusalem; which when the king and inhabitants of the city heard, they cloathed themselves in sackcloth, and, with all humility, cried unto God for mercy. A little before the offering up of the evening-sacrifice, (or before the time of evening-prayer), there appeared an angel over Jerusalem brandishing a flaming sword in his hand, as if he were going to destroy it; whereupon David implored God's mercy for the people, what vengeance soever might light upon him, who was chiefly guilty: But as he was expecting some heavy stroke, the angel sent Gad to him, with orders to go immediately, and build an altar in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, which accordingly he did, and having purchased the place, and some oxen for sacrifice, (c) for || fifty shekels of silver, he offered burnt offerings and peace-offerings, whereof the Lord declared his acceptance by fire from heaven; and so the plague ceased.

His employing his time towards the latter end of his life.

It is not improbable, that God at this time revealed to David the exact frame and fashion of the temple; that from the acceptableness of his sacrifices, he perceived that this threshing-floor was the place which God had designed

God repented him of the evil, and commanded the angel, who smote the people, to stay his hand. They therefore conclude, that as the word *Moed* properly signifies an *assembly*, the time *Moed* must be, when the people met together at the time of evening sacrifice, *i. e.* about the ninth hour of the day; and consequently, that the plague continued from the morning to this time, which is about nine hours, or the eighth part of three days; God, in his mercy, having been pleased to mitigate the rigour of his judgment, upon the sincere repentance of his people; *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Pool's Annotations*.

(c) 2 Sam. xxiv. 24.

|| There is again another difference in the account which we have in the Chronicles, and this in Samuel. In the Chronicles it is said, that David bought the threshing-floor, &c. for six hundred shekels of gold; but in Samuel it is said, for fifty shekels of silver. Now, a shekel of gold being of twelve times more value than a shekel of silver, it makes the disparity very large; and therefore (to account for this) it is generally supposed, that in the whole David made two purchases; first he bought the threshing-floor and oxen, for which he gave fifty shekels of silver; but that afterwards all the ground about it (out of which the courts of the temple were made) cost him six hundred shekels of gold; *Patrick's Commentary*.

for

for the situation of his temple ; that therefore he not only purchased that, but the whole top of the mount of Moriah likewise, at the price of (d) *six hundred shekels of gold*, for the ground-plot of this temple; and that all the remainder of his time was employed in providing whatever was necessary for the purpose of building it; in settling the number of the officers, and the manner of the daily service of those that were to attend it; next to this, in settling his civil affairs, and appointing (e) judges, magistrates, and all inferior officers, whose business it was to punish offenders, and to keep all others to their duty; then, in settling his (f) military matters, particularly the twelve captains, for every month, with their legions, to attend on the king in their turns; then (g) the princes of the twelve tribes, and afterwards (h) several other officers.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Aut. Chron.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

But while he was contriving these things in the best manner, he seems to have been taken either with a dead palsy, or some other distemper, which chilled his blood, so that he could not be warm in his bed. His physicians therefore advised, that to supply him with † a natural heat, a virgin should lie in the same bed with him; for which purpose Abisbag of Shunem, in the tribe of Issachar, was

(d) 1 Chron. xxi. 25. (e) 1 Chron. xxvi. 29. to the end.
(f) Ibid. xxvii. 1. to 15. (g) Ibid. (h) Ibid. xxix. 1. to 20.

† It is the observation of Galen, in his fifth book *Of the power of simple medicines*, that nothing so effectually procures heat and health as the application of any thing young to the stomach: David's physicians therefore advised not amiss; but it had been sinful advice, and such as he could not have followed, had not this young woman, whom he took to bed to him, been his concubinary wife. In those days such wives were allowable: And that she served him in this capacity, is very manifest from the account we have of her in Scripture; for, whereas it is said, that *the king knew her not*, this certainly implies, that he might have had carnal knowledge of her without sin or scandal; whereas it is said, that *she lay in his bosom*; this phrase every where in Scripture denotes what was the sole privilege of a wife, or concubine, Gen. xvi. 5. Deut. xiii. 6. Nor can we imagine, why Adonijah's desiring her in marriage had been so heinous a crime in Solomon's account, had she not been the king's wife, and he, by this means, had designed to revive his pretensions to the crown; *Pool's Annotations*.

12. M. brought to him, and made his concubinary wife, though
 2981, &c. he never had any carnal knowledge of her.
 Ant. Christ. Adonijah, who (next after Absalom) was David's eldest
 1023, &c. son, taking the advantage of his father's age and infirmity,
 from 2 Sam. began to entertain thoughts of making himself king, pre-
 xix. to summing that his father either could not, or would not ob-
 1 Kings viii. struct him. He was indeed a prince of exquisite beauty,
 His pro- claiming Solomon his successeur, admired by all, and so indulged by his father, that he †
 never contradicted him in any thing; but as he had a great
 deal of Absalom in his complexion, he failed not to imi-
 tate him in his equipage, attendants, and splendid manner
 of life.

By some means, however, he had gained Joab the general of the forces, and Abiathar the high-priest, over to his party; and by their advice it was, that he invited all the king's sons, (except Solomon), and all the great men of Judah, except Nathan the prophet, Benaiah captain of the guards, and the officers of the army, (who, with Zadok the other high-priest, were not for him), to a sumptuous entertainment at Enrogel, where the purpose of the meeting was (as soon as the company had well feasted) to proclaim him king in the room of his father. Nathan, who knew † God's designation, David's choice, and the people's interest in the matter, having got intelligence of this, went and acquainted Bathsheba with it, and advised her by all means to go and press the king † to declare Solomon his successeur,

† It is remarked of David, that one of his great faults, and what had led him into many premunires, was his extraordinary indulgence to his children, of whom he was so fond, that he seems to have overlooked their errors, and not reproved them, tho' he was bound to do it by a plain law, Lev. xix. 17. and could not but know, that the high-priest Eli was severely punished for this neglect; *Pool's Annotations.*

† In 2 Sam. vii. 12. God had promised David by Nathan, that he would set upon his throne a son that should proceed from him, which plainly signified, that none of his sons already born were to be the person; and in 1 Chron. xxii. 9. *etc.* he declared by the same prophet, that after his father, Solomon should reign, and build him an house. This Adonijah could not but know; and therefore his setting himself against the decree of Heaven made his sin the greater; *Patrick's Com.*

† This power of naming a successeur was first assumed by David, and for some time afterwards (as appears by the story of his grandson Rehoboam) was continued in the Jewish state.

successour, since things were now come to that extremity, that without her doing this, all their lives must certainly be in danger. Bathsheba pursued her instructions; went to the king, and having acquainted him with Adonijah's conspiracy, desired him to name her son his successour, according to the oath that he had formerly made to her. While she was thus talking with the king, Nathan came in, and confirmed what she had said; so that David immediately declared Solomon his successour, and there upon commanded Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the captain of his guards, with the other officers and ministers of state, to mount † him on the mule, that he himself used to ride; and, having in this manner † conducted him to Gihon, there to let Zadok and Nathan anoint him, and then by sound of trumpet, to proclaim him king of Israel. All this was accordingly done, and the people of

A. M.
 2981, &c.
 Ant. Christ.
 1023, &c.
 from 2 Sam.
 xix. to
 1 Kings viii.

It was a privilege that in after-ages, was granted to several good princes; but among the Israelites it did not prevail long, because the constitution of other nations (to which the Israelites affected to conform themselves) was different; *Pool's Annotations*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

† All the rest of David's sons were wont to ride upon mules, when they went abroad, 2 Sam. xiii. 29.; but David had a mule peculiar to himself, and the mounting Solomon upon it was a sufficient declaration in his favour. For, as it was capital (according to Maimonides) to ride upon the king's mule, or sit on his throne, or handle his sceptre without his order; so, on the contrary to have the honour to ride upon the king's horse, by his appointment, was accounted the highest dignity among the Persians, as appears by the story of Mordecai in the book of Esther; *Calmet's Comment.*

† Some commentators are of opinion, that Gihon was the same with the fountain of Siloam; but this is a gross mistake, since Gihon was manifestly to the west, and Siloam to the east of Jerusalem. There is little or no certainty likewise in the notions of some Rabbins, who pretend that, in ancient times, kings were always anointed by the side of a fountain, by way of good omen, or that the perpetual running of the stream might be an emblem of the perpetuity of their king's reign. In the history of Saul, who was their first king, and of David who was three times anointed, we find no mention made of any spring or fountain. As these fountains however were places of great concourse, (for there were not many in Jerusalem), the chief reason we imagine, why David ordered Solomon to be anointed at one of these, was, that the thing might be done as publicly, and in the presence of as many spectators as possible; *Patrick's Commentary*.

Jerusalem,

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

Jerusalem, by their loud shouts and acclamations of joy, gave testimony of their approbation of David's choice.

But how thunderstruck was Adonijah, and his company, when, being just upon the point of proclaiming him king, they heard the sound of the trumpet, and the shouts of the people attending Solomon! As soon as they were informed of the occasion, each man thought proper to shift for himself; but, as for Adonijah, he * fled to the altar for sanctuary, till, having obtained of Solomon a promise of life, upon condition that he would never attempt any thing for the future against his government, he was conducted into the king's presence, where he made his obeisance to Solomon, in token of thankfulness for his preservation, and in acknowledgment of his superiority.

His speech
to the prin-
ces and peo-
ple of Israel,
concerning
the build-
ing of the
temple.

This inauguration of Solomon, however, was a little too hasty and private; and therefore David, intending a more public coronation, ordered all the princes of Israel and Judah, and all the officers of his court and army, to attend him: When, having recovered a little from his late indispo-

* There is no precept in the law to make the altar a privileged place; but, in conformity to the customs of other nations, the Jews seem to have done it. Other nations had certainly this custom, as appears from that passage in Virgil:

Talibus orabat dictis, arasque tenebat. Æneid vi.

And it seems not unlikely, that as the people, when they came into the land of Canaan, had cities appointed by God, whereunto the manslayer might fly; so, while they continued in the wilderness, the camp of the Levites might serve for the same purpose. Nay, from the words in Exod. xxi. 14. where God orders the wilful murderer *to be taken from his altar that he may die*, it seems unquestionably true, that even in the land of Canaan, the altar continued a sanctuary for those who fled into it; but then the question is, to what altar Adonijah fled? Whether to the brazen one, which Moses made, and which was now at Gibeon, or that which his father had lately erected in the threshing-floor of Araunah? It is expressly said, 1 Kings i. 50. that *he caught hold of the horns of the altar*; but we can hardly suppose, say some, that the altar in the threshing-floor, which was run up in such haste with stones and turf, was made in that figure. But what should hinder us from supposing, that as David had built a place for the reception of the ark of the covenant on mount Sion, he had likewise built there an altar for the oblation of the daily sacrifices, in the exact form of the original one that was then at Gibeon, and that it was to this altar, and neither of the others, that Adonijah betook himself for refuge; *Le Clerc's, Patrick's, and Calmet's Commentaries.*

sition,

fition, he stood up, and, * in a solemn oration, put them in mind of God's goodness to him, and of his designation of Solomon to succeed in his throne, and to build him a temple. And therefore, since he had reserved that honour for his son, he earnestly recommended to him a strict fidelity and piety towards God, and a zealous discharge of this important trust. To this purpose he gave him the plan

A. M.
981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
rom 2 Sam.
ix. to
1 Kings viii.

*The speech which Josephus puts in David's mouth upon this occasion, is to this purpose: — " I am now to inform you, " my countrymen and brethren, that I have had it a long time " in my thoughts to erect a temple to the Lord, and have trea- " sured up a mighty mass of gold and silver toward the charge " of the undertaking; but it hath pleased God in his providence, " by the mouth of his prophet Nathan, to put a stop to my de- " sign upon this consideration, that he would not have the foun- " dation of his holy house laid by hands that have been dipped " in blood, which mine inevitably have been, (though in the " blood of your enemies), in the wars I have been forced to en- " gage in, for the necessary defence of your liberties: But, at the " same time that he forbade me to do this, the prophet inform- " ed me, that God had transmitted the care of the whole work " to my son and successor. Our father Jacob (as you all well " know) had twelve sons, and yet Judah was chosen by common " consent to be ruler of all the rest. You know likewise, that I my- " self (though there were then six brothers of us) was advanced " by God to the government, and that none of the rest thought " themselves injured: Wherefore I must now, in like manner, " require it of you, and of all your sons, that you submit cheer- " fully and dutifully to my son Solomon, and that ye do it with- " out any grumbling, or civil dissention, because it is from God's " immediate command and commission that he derives his au- " thority. Put the case now, that God should have set a stran- " ger over you, how great a folly and madness would it have " been for you to murmur at it? But how thankful ought you " to be, for the choice of so near a relation, when you your- " selves are partakers of the honour that is done to your brother. " There is nothing I so much long for, as to see God's gracious " promises take a speedy effect, and the whole people put into " a lasting possession of the blessings they are to enjoy under the " reign of Solomon. And all this, my dear son, (says he, turning " to Solomon), will be made good, and every thing succeed to " your wish, so long as you govern according to piety and justice, " with a respect to your duty both towards God and man, up- " holding a reverence to the laws, and treading in the steps of " your forefathers: But, whenever you pass these bounds, there " is nothing but ruin and misery to be expected;" *Jewish An-
tiq. lib. vii. c. 11.*

which

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1023, etc.
from 2Sam.
xi.
1 Kings viii.

which he had made for the execution of this undertaking, and an account of the treasures which he had provided for the perfecting of this great work. He gave him also a list of the priests and Levites, and the courses in which they were to wait in the temple: He gave him likewise the schemes and regulations of the officers of his court, of the civil officers, of the treasurers, and of the superintendents of the revenues belonging to the crown; and, having made a large oblation of money out of his own private estate for the building of the temple, by his example and persuasion he prevailed with the princes and the people to contribute (according to their abilities) to so good and pious a work. And when he found himself successful herein, (for what they gave upon this occasion amounted to an immense sum), he concluded all with a solemn thanksgiving to God, and a prayer, that he would enable Solomon to perfect what he had thus designed and recommended.

The next day there was a very great and solemn sacrifice, and much rejoicing among the people. David, upon this occasion had Solomon anointed a second time, in a more public manner; ordered that Zadok should be the high-priest in the room of Abiathar, who had publicly espoused the interest of Adonijah; and, to put an end to all disputes after his decease) had him for the future seated on a royal throne, and made sole regent of the kingdom during his life-time.

And dying
charged to
his son So-
lomon.

Not long after this, David, perceiving his end approaching, called for Solomon * and gave him his last exhortation, which was, to be constant in his duty to God,

to

* Josephus introduces David as taking his last leave of his son Solomon in these words: — “ And now, son, I am going to
“ my fathers, and you, that I leave behind me, are in due
“ time to follow, which is no more than paying a common
“ debt to nature. There is no returning from the grave, and
“ when we are once gone, we have done with this world for
“ ever. Wherefore, while I am yet among the living, and
“ before it be too late, pray let me remind you of the same
“ things once more. — Govern your subjects according to
“ justice. Worship that God from whom you have received
“ your dignity as well as your being, as you are bound to do.
“ Observe his precepts, and keep his laws, as they have been
“ handed down to you from Moses, and have a care that you
“ never forsake them, either for fear, flattery, or any passion or
“ interest whatsoever; for otherwise you can never hope for the
“ blessings

(i) to walk in his ways, and † keep his statutes, and his commandments, his judgments, and his testimonies, that he might prosper in all that he did; and then descending to some particular affairs relating to the state, he charged him to do justice to Joab, for the many murders he had been guilty of; to shew kindness to the sons of Barzillai, for the support their father had given him in his distress; and though he himself had not put Shimei to death for his past offences, yet whenever he should prove guilty again, not to spare him. Having thus ended his exhortation to his son, in a short time after he died in the seventy-first year of his age, after he had reigned forty years in all, || seven

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix, to
1 Kings viii.

* blessings of God's favour and providence: But if you behave
" yourself with reverence and submission towards God, as you
" ought to do, and as I wish you may do, your kingdom will
" be established to yourself, and the succession of it continued to
" your family, from generation to generation;" *Jewish Antiq.*
lib. vii. c. 12.

(i) 1 Kings ii. 3,—11.

† Under these four words are comprehended all the laws of Moses. Statutes were such constitutions as had their foundation, not in reason, but in the will and pleasure of God; such was the prohibition of sowing seeds of different kinds together, &c. Commandments were moral duties, that were founded in the nature of things, and carried their reason along with them; as, not to steal, not to murder, &c. Judgments were the laws belonging to civil government, and the dealings of one man with another; such are all those laws that are recorded in the 21st and following chapters of Exodus; and testimonies were such laws as preserved the remembrance of some great events, and testified to men the loving-kindness of the Lord; such as the Sabbath, the Passover, and the rest of the feasts; *Patrick's Comment.*

|| In 2 Sam. v. 5. it is said, that he reigned seven years and six months in Hebron, which, together with the three and thirty in Jerusalem, will make his reign to be in all forty years and a half. To solve this difficulty, (as some of the Jews esteem it), they have devised a conceit, that, to punish David for his adultery with Bathsheba, God sent upon him a leprosy which continued for six months, in all which time he was looked upon as dead, and not accounted to reign: But they never considered, that these months were part of his reign in Hebron, before he committed that adultery in Jerusalem. The true account of the matter therefore is, that it is very usual in Scripture-computation, to omit smaller sums, and only reckon by a round number; for which reason these six months, which were but part of a year, are not taken notice of in the account both of kings,

A. M. 2681, etc. Ant. Chris. 1023, &c. from 2 Sam. xix. to 1 Kings viii.
 ven in Hebron, and three and thirty in Jerusalem; and * was buried in that part of the city which himself had taken from the Jebusites, and called after his own name.

When

1 Kings ii. 11. and Chronicles, 1 Chron. xxix. 26, 27. ; *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Pool's Annotations*.

* After this account which Josephus gives us of David's several speeches before his death, he informs us,—"That he
 " was buried at Jerusalem with a solemnity of royal pomp
 " and magnificence, that was glorious to the highest degree,
 " and that, over and above the splendour of the ceremony, his
 " son Solomon deposited in his monument an inestimable treasure, from which, when Antiochus, surnamed *the Pious*, besieged Jerusalem, Hircanus, the high-priest, took to the
 " sum of three thousand talents, and therewith bribed them
 " to raise the siege; and that, many years after this, Herod, surnamed *the Great*, took another immense sum from
 " thence, which enabled him to rebuild the temple." Among several nations indeed it was customary to bury, along with princes and other great men, various things of value, that they took delight in while they lived. The Egyptians were used to this; and about their mummies are frequently found very precious ornaments. When Alexander the Great had Cyrus's tomb opened, there was found therein a bed of gold, a very rich table, drinking cups, and many fine vestments; but, notwithstanding all this, several learned men look upon this whole account of Josephus as a mere fable. For to what purpose, say they, did Solomon bury all this treasure under ground, when he had so much occasion for it; when he was forced to borrow money of the king of Tyre, and burthen his people with so many heavy taxes to supply his excessive expences? How came it, that the other kings of Judah, who were frequently put to the necessity of stripping the temple of its precious furniture to satisfy their greedy enemies, never once adventured to lay hold on this treasure? How came it to escape the hands of the Chaldeans, and other nations, that so often had the plundering of Jerusalem? Or why should Hircanus violate this *depositum*, which his predecessors esteemed more sacred than the holy vessels of the Lord? These are questions that cannot easily be resolved; and (what is a farther confutation of this story) in that very book, from whence Josephus is supposed to have taken it, it is never once said, that Hircanus broke open David's tomb. The words of that spurious author are, that "Hircanus, while he was besieged
 " by Antiochus, opened a treasure-chamber which belonged to
 " some of David's descendents, and that, after he had taken a large
 " sum of money out of it, he still left a great deal in it, and sealed
 " it up gain:" But this is a different thing, and has no relation to the sepulchre of David. As to the real sepulchre of David,

it

When David was dead, Solomon succeeded to the throne; and, to secure his possession, took an occasion, in a short time, to rid himself of his adversaries. Adonijah, in his father's lifetime, made bold pretensions, but was defeated, and pardoned by Solomon, upon condition that he would become a good subject, and give him no farther molestation; but, by the persuasion of Joab and Abiather, he was now put upon another bold project, which was to desire Abishag (the late king's concubine in his old age) in marriage, hoping thereby to strengthen his

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 K. xg. viii.
Solomon
succeeds his
father Da-
vid, and
cuts off his
chief adver-
saries.

it is certain, that it was always held in great veneration among the Jews. It was in being in St Peter's time, for so he tells the people, Acts ii. 29. Dio (in Adriani vita) informs us, that part of it was fallen down in the Emperor Adrian's reign. St Jerom relates, that he himself used frequently to go and pray at it; and modern travellers (as we took notice before) describe some magnificent monuments hewed in a rock, not far from Jerusalem, which are doubtless very ancient; but they themselves do not agree, that they were the sepulchres of the kings of Judah. It is somewhat unaccountable, however, that the place of this prince's sepulchre, which both the Chaldeans and the Romans, when they took Jerusalem, thought proper to spare, should now be so entirely lost that we cannot find the least remains of it. But though providence has so ordered it, that the place of David's sepulchre should not at present be known, yet their does not want an eternal monument of his most excellent genius. The book of Psalms, which for the most part was composed by him, does publish the glory of its author, more than the most pompous eulogies; and the author of Ecclesiasticus (chap. xlvii. 2. &c.) has consecrated this epitaph to his memory, which is more durable than either marble or brass:—*As the fat is taken away from the peace-offering, so was David chosen out of the people of Israel. He played with lions as with kids, and with bears as with lambs; he slew a giant when he was young, and took away reproach from the people; for he called upon the Most High Lord, and he gave strength to his right-hand to slay this mighty warrior, and to set up the horn of his people. So the people honoured him with ten thousands, and praised him in blessings of the Lord; for he destroyed the enemies on every side, and brought to nought the Philistines his adversaries:—In all his works he praised the Holy One most high, and blessed the Lord with words of glory:—He set singers also before the altar, that by their voices they might make sweet melody, and daily sing praises in their songs. He beautified their feasts, and set their solemn times in perfect order:—The Lord took away his sins, and exalted his horn for ever; he gave him a covenant of kings, and a throne of glory in Israel; Calmet's Commentary, and his Dictionary, under the word David.*

A. M. interest, and to be able to play an after-game for the
 2081, etc. crown. To this purpose he prevailed with Bathsheba,
 Ant. Chriſt. the queen-mother, to ſpeak to the king: But the king
 1023, etc. was ſo far from granting his requeſt, that he was ſhocked
 from 2 Sam. at the boldneſs of it, and, ſuſpecting ſome treaſonable
 xix. to deſign at the bottom, ſent immediately and had him put
 1 Kings viii. to death. In the next place, he baniſhed Abiather; and
 having inhibited him from the exerciſes of his prieſtly of-
 fice, confined him to his country-houſe, and put Zadok
 in his place; and when he heard that Joab was fled into the
 tabernacle for ſanctuary, upon his reſuſing to come out
 at his command, † he ordered Beniah (whom he after-
 wards made general in his room) to go in, and kill him
 there. But when Shimei, who deſerved the like fate for
 his groſs abuſe of the late king, was brought before him,
 he only † confined him to Jeruſalem, as a priſoner at large,
 but with a ſtrict injunction not to move out of the place
 upon

† It was formerly very cuſtomary among princes, to employ
 their officers, or greateſt confidants, in ſuch like executions. A-
 mong the Romans, the ſoldiers were always the perſons who carri-
 ed to priſon, to torture, or to execution, ſuch as were found guilty
 of any offence; and this Tertullian makes an argument to diſſuade
 Chriſtians from engaging in the wars, leſt thereby they ſhould be
 obliged to imprifon, puniſh, or execute malefaſtors. In Dan. ii.
 24. we read, that Nebuchadnezzar ſent *Ariocho, who was chief*
commander of his troops, to deſtroy the wiſe men of Babylon, be-
 cauſe they could not interpret his dream; and therefore we
 need leſs wonder, that we find Solomon employing Benaiah,
 the captain of his guard, on the like office. But whether he
 did not firſt drag Joab from the altar before he ſlew him, for
 fear of polluting the holy place with blood, or whether So-
 lomon did not rather think fit to have him killed even at the
 altar, and let all men ſee, that no place, though never ſo ſa-
 cred, ſhould ſecure any man from the hand of Juſtice, com-
 mentators have not agreed; *Calmet's* and *Patrick's* *Commen-*
taries.

† Shimei, as we read, was a very powerful man. When he
 came to meet King David, and to beg pardon for his offence,
 he had a thouſand of his own tribe to accompany him, 2 Sam.
 xix. 17; and therefore Solomon might think proper to con-
 fine him to the city of Jeruſalem, that, being removed from the
 place where his family and intereſt lay, to one where he was
 but a ſtranger, and ſufficiently odious for his former ill-treatment
 of the late king, he might be incapable of raiſing any tumults
 or ſeditious; and that, being in this public theatre, all his
 words and actions might be narrowly obſerved, which, conſider-
 ing

upon pain of death. Upon this condition he thankfully accepted of his life, and, for some time, kept within the bounds of his confinement; but having some slaves, who had run away, and had entered themselves into † the service of Achish, king of Gath, he imprudently went to reclaim them, and, upon his return, by Solomon's order, was put to death.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Chris.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

Having thus secured his kingdom at home, by confining, or cutting off, the heads of the faction that was against him, Solomon bethought himself of strengthening his interest abroad by foreign alliances; and, to this purpose, married the daughter of † Pharaoh king of Egypt, and

ing his busy and wicked temper, might give Solomon a fair advantage against him; and (as the manner of some is) the very prohibition itself might probably inflame his desire to transgress it; *Pool's Annotations*.

† Achish had been so great a friend to David, that, though David had conquered the Philistines, he suffered him still to retain the title of a king, and only to be tributary to him; so that there was a friendly correspondence between this city and Jerusalem, insomuch, that Shimei might easily hear, by somebody or other that had been at Gath, that his servants were there. These servants, in all probability, were such as he had purchased with a considerable sum of money, and their running away was not only a loss, but a great affront likewise to their master; and therefore, partly out of rage, and partly through covetousness, he undertook this dangerous journey, presuming that a thing which might be done secretly and speedily, would never come to Solomon's ears; that, in the space of three years time, Solomon might have forgot his injunction; or that, if he remembered it, he would not be so rigid as to put it in execution; especially since he went out of Jerusalem, not through wantonness, or any contempt of authority, but merely to recover what he had lost, which, he might think, was a thing excusable; *Pool's Annotations*, and *Patrick's Commentary*.

† It may seem somewhat strange, that in all the history of the Jews, from the time of Moses to this of Solomon, no mention should be made of the kings of Egypt, as if they had no concern in the affairs of Canaan, but were wholly diverted some other way: But for this, their own historians account, when they tell us, that, during this space of time, the Egyptian kings did nothing worth recording; Diodor. Biblioth. lib. i. p. 29. All these kings of Egypt were called *Pharaohs*; but Pharaoh was not a proper name, but a title of dignity only, which imported the same as sultan or emperor. They had, besides this, other names; and Clemens Alexandrinus, in a passage taken

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.
Begins his
reign with
a good sense
of religion.

and appointed her at first an apartment in his own palace; but after he had finished the temple, built her a very stately palace adjoining to his own, which she badly deserved; for in process of time, this woman, among others, contributed not a little to the perversion of Solomon.

He began his reign however with a good sense of religion upon his mind; for which end, taking the chief of the officers and nobility along with him, he went to Gibeon, where the original tabernacle and altar, that were made in the wilderness, were kept, and there offered a thousand sacrifices, in acknowledgment of God's kindness to him, in placing him upon his father's throne. In the night following, when God appeared to him in a vision, and promised to grant whatever he should ask, he begged him to give him † a wife and understanding heart, and († considering

ken from Alexander Polyhistor, tells us, that the proper name of this Egyptian king, whose daughter Solomon married, was *Vaphres*; *Le Clerc's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

† Hereupon some Jewish annotators have observed, that though Solomon, in his great modesty, might request of God no more than the gift of government, or (as he expresses it) *an understanding heart to judge the people, and to discern between good and evil*. 1 Kings iii. 9.; yet God, out of his abundant grace, gave him a general knowledge of all other things, as the following history informs us: and that, whereas other men gather their knowledge from study and observation, Solomon had his by an immediate inspiration from God; insomuch that *he, who went to bed as ignorant as other men, awaked in the morning like an angel of God*. But though his knowledge of things was, in a great measure infused, yet he did not therefore neglect his study. *He gave his heart to seek, and search out, by wisdom, concerning all things under the sun*; in which search (as he himself testifies, Ecclef. i. 13.) he took no small pains: so that his gifts extraordinary did not supersede the use of other means in the acquisition of knowledge; but by application and experience he perfected what he had so advantageously received from the hands of God; *Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

† The words of Solomon himself are, — *I am but a little child; I know not how to go out, or how to come in*, 1 Kings iii. 7. From whence some have inferred, that he was not above twelve years old when he spake them: But this must be a gross miscomputation. His father, when he left the kingdom to him, calls him *a wise man*, 1 Kings. ii. 6, 9. The foregoing story shows, that he had already sat some time on the throne, and therefore he calls himself a child, not in respect of his years,

considering his youth and inexperience) such qualities as were necessary for the due government of the people committed to his charge; which petition God was so well pleased with, that, over and above the wisdom which he asked, he promised to give him such affluence of riches and honour, as no king in his days should be able to equalize. When Solomon awaked out of sleep, he perceived that this was a dream sent from God; and therefore, returning to Jerusalem, he presented himself before the ark of the covenant, which was placed in a tabernacle, that David had made for it, and there he offered sacrifices in abundance.

Solomon (as we said) had obtained of God a promise of the gift of wisdom; and it was not long before he had an opportunity of shewing it, to the great satisfaction of all his subjects. † Two women, who both lived together in one house, were brought to bed about the same time, and one had overlaid her child. She, who found the dead child by her, accused the other of having stolen away her living child, and left her dead one in its place: The other

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

And great
demonstrations of his
wisdom.

years, (for most agree that he was twenty when he began to reign), but his skill in governing the people, and managing the affairs of state. This was a modest expression in Solomon; but it is an observation of Aristotle, in his book of politics, that young men are unfit for government, because their consultative power is imperfect; which, though it may not be a general rule, was delivered by Solomon himself, in his more mature years, for a maxim; for *Woe to the land* (says he, Eccles. x. 16.) *whose king is a child*; Patrick's Commentary.

† These two women are said in the text to be *harlots*; but the Hebrew word (as we took notice in the case of Rahab) may equally signify an hostess, or one who kept a house of public entertainment; and that it is so to be taken here, we have these reasons to presume: — That as all public prostitution was severely forbidden by the law, Deut. xxiii. 17. women of this infamous character durst not have presented themselves before so just and so wise a king; that women of this lewd behaviour seldom do become mothers of children, and when they chance to have any, are not so solicitous for their preservation, but rather rejoice when they have got rid of them. There is no reason to suppose then, that these women were common harlots; and yet it is generally thought, that they were both unmarried persons, and guilty of fornication, because no mention is made of their husbands, whose office it was (if they had any) to contest the matter for their wives; *Pool's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

pertinaciously

A. M. 2981, etc. Ant. Christ. 1023, etc. from 2 Sam. xix. to 1 Kings viii. pertinaciously denied the thing; so that the question was, *To whom did this living child belong?* And to determine this, Solomon commanded some that stood by, to take and cut the child in two, and to give to each woman a half; whereupon the real mother begs that the child may be saved, even though it be given to her adversary; but the pretended one is clearly for dividing it; which gave Solomon a full conviction, that she who expressed a tenderness and

† Solomon knew at once, that the only sign that would discover the true, would be her affection, and compassion, and tenderness for her child; and therefore, in order to distinguish between the two, his business was to make trial of this: And if we suppose, that when he commanded the child to be divided, he spake with a sedate countenance, and seeming earnestness, (as the true mother's petition to the king makes it apparent that he did), then we may suppose farther, not only the two women, but all the people present with horror and admiration, expecting the execution of the thing; which, when it ended in so just a decision, quite contrary to what they looked for, raised joy in every breast, and gave a more advantageous commendation to the judge: And yet Abarbinel, the Jewish commentator, thinks, that all this was no great proof of Solomon's extraordinary wisdom, nor could it beget that fear or reverence which the text says (1 Kings iii. 28.) it procured to his person. His opinion therefore is, that Solomon made a discovery of the truth antecedent to this experiment; that by observing the countenance, the manner of speech, and all the motions of the women, he discerned the secret of their hearts, and penetrated to the bottom of the business; and that his commanding the child to be divided afterwards, was only to notify to the company, what he before had discovered. However this be, it may not be improper, upon this occasion, to mention an instance or two out of profane history, of a singular address (though much inferior to this) in discovering such secrets as seemed to be past finding out. To this purpose, Suetonius (in his life of Claudian, chap. 15.) tells us, how that emperor discovered a woman to be the mother of a young man, whom she would not own for her son, by commanding her to be married to him: for the horror of committing incest obliged her to declare the truth; and in like manner, Diodorus Siculus relates, how Ariopharnes, King of the Thracians, being appointed to arbitrate between three men, who all pretended to be sons of the king of the Cimmerians, and claimed the succession, found out the true son and heir, by ordering them to shoot, each man his arrow, into the dead king's body; which one of them refusing to do, was deemed the true claimant; *Peel's Annotations; and Patrick's and Calmer's Commentaries.*
compassion

compassion for the child, was its true mother, and accordingly ordered it to be given her.

The wisdom of the king soon shed an happy influence over all his dominions, and every subject was, in some degree or other, made partaker of it. All Judah and Israel lived in the greatest security; and all the neighbouring nations either paid him tribute, or were his friends and allies. He ruled over all the countries and kingdoms, † from the Euphrates to the Nile, and in many places his dominions extended beyond the Euphrates. He had a great number of horses and chariots of war. Instances of his wisdom were as numerous as the sands of the sea, and in learning and knowledge he † surpassed all the orientals, and the Egyptians. In a word, he was the wisest of mankind, and his reputation was spread through all na-

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.
His large
dominions,
and won-
derful
learning,
and writ-
tings.

† The words in the text are, *And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt*, 1 Kings iv. 21.; for the bounds of his kingdom were, to the east, the Euphrates, which is here, and in other places of Scripture, called *the river*, without any addition; to the west, the country of the Philistines, which bordered upon the Mediterranean sea; and to the south, Egypt. So that Solomon had tributary to him the kingdoms of Syria, Damascus, Moab, and Ammon, which lay between Euphrates and the Mediterranean; as indeed, without such a number of tributary kingdoms, we cannot conceive how the country of Israel could have furnished such a constant supply of provisions, and other things necessary for the support of this prince's grandeur; *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries*.

† There were three nations in the east of Canaan, that were very famous for their wisdom and erudition; the Chaldeans, beyond the Euphrates; the Persians, beyond the Tygris; and the Arabians, on the nearer side of the Euphrates, a little towards the south: But whether the Persians and Chaldeans were remarkable for their learning in Solomon's day, is much doubted among commentators. The book of Job sufficiently shews, that the Arabians (for of that nation was Job and his friends) were famous for their learning in ancient times; and, as to the Chaldeans and other oriental people, since the sons of Noah took up their habitation about Babylon, and the neighbouring countries, it is reasonable to suppose, that where mankind first began to settle themselves into regular societies, there arts and sciences first began to appear. The Egyptians however pretend to a precedency in this, and several other accomplishments. They say, that the Chaldeans received the principles of philosophy at first from a colony that came from Egypt, as Diodorus indeed makes

A, M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
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1 Kings viii.

tions. He composed, or collected, * *three thousand proverbs*, and a † *thousand and five poems*. He knew the virtue of all plants and trees, from the highest to the bottom of such a colony, conducted by Belus : But the Chaldeans, on the other hand, maintain, that from them it was, that the Egyptians received their first instructions, and (according to some) that Abraham was the person who first communicated to the Chaldeans the knowledge of astronomy, and other sciences. However this be, Solomon received from God a perfect knowledge of all that useful and solid learning, for which the eastern people, and the Egyptians, were justly famed ; for (as it follows) he was a great moral philosopher, a great natural philosopher, and an excellent poet ; *Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

* Josephus, who loved to magnify every thing that concerned Solomon, instead of three thousand proverbs, tells us, that Solomon composed three thousand books of proverbs : The greater certainly is our loss, (if the thing were credible), because all the proverbs of Solomon; that we have now, are comprised in the book that goes under that name, and in his Ecclesiastes ; and yet some learned critics are of opinion, that the nine first chapters of the book of proverbs were not of Solomon's composition, and that the number of proverbs which properly belong to him, is no more than six hundred and fifty ; *Grotius's Annotations* ; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† These, one would think, were poems enough for a person that had so much more other business as King Solomon had ; but Josephus, who is never content, makes him the author of so many volumes of poetical compositions ; and the Septuagint indeed, as well as other interpreters, make the number of them to be no less than five thousand songs or odes : But, of all this number, we have none remaining but *the Song of Songs*, as it is called, except the hundred and twenty-sixth Psalm, which (in its Hebrew title) is ascribed to Solomon, may be supposed to be one of these. The *Psalter of Solomon*, which contains eighteen psalms, (a work that was found in Greek in the library of Aufburgh, and has been translated into Latin by John Lewis de la Cerda) is supposed by the learned to be none of Solomon's, but of some Hellenistical Jew, much conversant in reading the sacred authors, and who had composed them in imitation of the Psalms of David, whose style he closely pursued, and had inserted several passages of the prophets, (especially of Isaiah and Ezekiel), which he accommodated well enough to his purpose. However this be, these eighteen psalms were not unknown to the ancients ; for they were formerly in the famous Alexandrian manuscript, which is with us, as may be seen by the index which is still to be found at the end of the New Testament, though the psalms themselves have either been torn out of the book, or lost by some accident ; *Le Clerc's* and *Calmet's Commentaries* ; and his *Dictionary*, under the word *Solomon*.

lowest ;

lowest ; and in his books treated of the nature of † all kinds of beasts, and birds, and reptiles, and fishes ; inso-
 much, that * there was a concourse of strangers from all countries to hear his wisdom, and ambassadors from the most remote princes that had heard of his fame.

A. M.
 2981, &c.
 Ant. Christ.
 1023, &c.
 from 2 Sam.
 xix. to
 1 Kings viii.

† The several books which treated of the nature and virtue of animals, as well as plants, are supposed to have been lost in the Babylonish captivity ; but Eusebius (as he is quoted by Anastasius) informs us, that King Hezekiah, seeing the abuse which his subjects made of Solomon's works, by placing too much confidence in the remedies which he prescribed, and the natural secrets which he discovered, thought proper to suppress them all. Notwithstanding this, since his time, many books, concerning the secrets of magic, medicine, and enchantments, have appeared under the name of this prince ; and several pieces have been quoted, such as *The instructions of Solomon to his son Rehoboam* ; *The testament of Solomon* ; *The books of the throne of Solomon* ; *The books of magic, composed by the demons, under the name of Solomon* ; *The Clavicula, or key of Solomon* ; *The ring of Solomon* ; *The contradiction of Solomon*, &c. ; which were most of them very wicked and pernicious tracts, to which the authors prefixed this great name, to give them more credit and sanction. It is somewhat strange, however, that Josephus should inform us, that Solomon composed books of enchantments, and several manners of exorcisms, or of driving away devils, so that they could return no more ; and that he should further assure us, that himself had seen experiments of it by one Eleazer, a Jew, who, in the presence of Vespasian, his sons, and the officers of his army, cured several that were possessed ; *Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2.* ; and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Solomon*.

* It is a conceit of one of the Jewish interpreters, that all the kings of the neighbouring countries went to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and that, upon their return, their subjects came to them to hear what he had said ; but as we hear of none but the Queen of Sheba who came to visit Solomon, we cannot but think, that if any other crowned heads had resorted to him, the history would have recorded them as well as her. The words denote no more, than that the kings of all the neighbouring nations sent their ambassadors, and people of every land, that had heard of Solomon's fame, came to see him ; for " no spectacle" (says an ingenious author) " is more lovely and grateful, than a wise and good king ; all men flock to see him, and to partake of his pious and prudent mind. They that see him are loth to leave him, and they that hear of him are as desirous to see him as children are to find their unknown father ;" *Dion Pruseus Orat. de regno*.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1423, &c.
from 2 Sam.

xix. to
1 Kings viii.

His league
and con-
tract with
Hiram,
king of
Tyre, for
materials to
build the
temple,
which ac-
cordingly he
finished.

As soon as Hiram, king of Tyre, understood that Solomon was made king of Israel, * he sent ambassadors to him to condole his father's death, and congratulate him

† The fourth chapter of the first of Kings is chiefly taken up in recording the prime ministers and officers of Solomon's court, the compass and extent of his kingdom, the happiness and security of his subjects, the pomp and magnificence of his living, and the excellence of his own wisdom and erudition.

* This Hiram was doubtless the son of that other Hiram, who sent David timber and artificers wherewith to build his palace : For, if (according to Josephus) the temple was built in the twelfth year of Hiram's reign, and the fourth of Solomon's, this Hiram could not be the same with him who sent David men and materials ; because that Hiram was upon the throne when David took Jerusalem, which happened to be three and thirty years before Solomon began his reign. There are two letters which passed between this Hiram and King Solomon, recorded by Josephus, and for the authenticity of which, he appeals both to the Jewish and Tyrian records, that are to this effect :

“ King Solomon, to Hiram, greeting.

“ Be it known unto thee, O King, that my father David had it
“ a long time in his mind and purpose to erect a temple to the Lord ;
“ but being perpetually in war in his days, and under a necessity of
“ clearing his hands of his enemies, and making them all his tribu-
“ taries, before he could attend this great and holy work, he hath
“ left it to me, in a time of peace, both to begin and finish it, ac-
“ cording to the direction, as well as prediction, of the Almighty.
“ Blessed be his great name for the present tranquillity of my domi-
“ nions ! And, by his gracious assistance, I shall now dedicate the
“ best improvements of this liberty and leisure to his honour and
“ worship. Wherefore I make it my request, that you will let some
“ of your people go along with some servants of mine to mount Li-
“ banus, to assist them in cutting down materials towards this build-
“ ing ; (for the Sydonians understand it much better than we do) ;
“ and as for the workmens reward, or wages, whatever you think
“ reasonable shall be punctually paid to them,”

“ King Hiram, to King Solomon.

“ Nothing could have been more welcome to me, than to
“ understand, that the government of your blessed father is, by
“ God's providence devolved into the hands of so excellent, so
“ wise, and so virtuous a successor. His holy name be praised
“ for it ! That which you write for shall be done with all care
“ and good will : For I will give orders to cut down and ex-
“ port such quantities of the fairest cedars, and cypress-trees,
“ as you shall have occasion for. My people shall bring them
“ to the sea-side for you, and from thence ship them away to
“ what

him upon his accession to the throne : And, in a short time after, Solomon, in return, sent an embassy to him, desiring him to supply him with wood, and workmen, and to lend him his assistance in building the temple of the Lord. Hiram very readily complied with his desire, and sent him word, that he would order cedar-trees and fir-trees to be cut down upon Mount Libanus ; that his people should put them on floats, and bring them by sea to the harbour of Joppa ; and that from thence Solomon, (who contracted to give Hiram such a quantity of wheat and wine, and oil, &c. every year for the maintenance of his household and workmen) might send, and fetch them to Jerusalem.

A. M. 2981, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

All things being thus agreed on, the preparations for the building of the temple went on apace. Seventy thousand profelytes, who were the remains of the ancient Canaanites, Solomon employed in carrying burdens upon their shoulders ; fourscore thousand in cutting stone out of the quarries ; and three thousand six hundred in overseeing the work. Of his own subjects, he sent thirty thousand to work with the king of Tyre's men in the quarries of Libanus : And (to finish the inner part of the temple, as well as frame some of its choicest vessels) Hiram * sent him a most skilful artist of his own name, whose mother was of the

“ what port you please, where they may lie ready for your own
“ men to transport them to Jerusalem. It would be a great ob-
“ ligation, after all this, to allow us such a provision of corn in
“ exchange, as may stand with your convenience ; for that is the
“ commodity that we islanders want most ;” *Jewish Antiq.*
lib. viii. c. 2. But notwithstanding all his appeal to the Tyrian records, some have suspected Josephus, as to the genuineness of these two letters, especially where they find him bringing in Hiram, speaking of Tyre, as if it had been an island ; whereas it is plain, that the old Tyre, which was then standing, and must be the place here spoken of, was situate on the continent ; *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

* In former times, among the Hebrews, there had been very excellent workmen, who knew how to cut and engrave precious stones, to cast and work upon metals, &c. ; but this was before they came into the land of Canaan, in the time of Moses, when Belzaleel and Aholiab were excellent in many different arts, which were necessary for the work of the temple ; but, as the Scripture acquaints us, that they had their skill by inspiration from God, it does not appear that they had any successors : And, after the people had got possession of Canaan, they neglected

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

the tribe of Dan, but his father a Tyrian ; and (what was prodigious) his abilities extended to all kind of works, whether in gold, silver, brass, or iron, whether in linen, tapestry, or embroidery ; and by his direction all the curious furniture of the temple was both designed and finished.

And now all things being in readiness, the foundation of the temple was laid in the † fourth year of King Solomon's reign, in the year of the creation two thousand nine hundred and ninety-two, four hundred and eighty years after the Israelites escape from the Egyptian bondage ; and, in the * space of seven years and an half,

was

neglected all manufactures, and applied themselves wholly to agriculture and feeding of cattle ; so that, in the time of Solomon, there were no professed artists that could undertake the work of the temple ; but in Tyre and Sydon there were many ; for, both in his Iliad and his Odyssey, Homer gives the people of these two places this character, whom (upon every turn) he calls Πολυδαίδαλλος, *excellent artists in several kinds of work* ; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† If it be asked, why Solomon did not begin the building of the temple sooner, and even in the first year of his reign, since his father had left him a plan, and all things necessary for the undertaking ? Abarbinel's answer is, — That Solomon would not make use of what his father had prepared, but was resolved to build this temple all at his proper cost and charge. He therefore put into the treasure of the Lord's house all that David had dedicated to the work ; and, to gather together as much gold and silver as was necessary to defray so vast an expence, four years can be accounted no unreasonable time. Nay, even suppose that he made use of the treasure which his father had amassed, yet, if the materials that his father had provided lay at a considerable distance, and were left rude and unfashioned, it would cost all this time to form them into the exact symmetry, wherein the Scripture represents them before they were brought together, especially considering, that the very stones which made the foundation, were very probably vast blocks of marble, or porphyry, 1 Kings v. 17. ; and all polished in the most exquisite manner ; *Patrick's Commentary* ; and *Pool's Annotations*.

† The temple itself was but a small edifice, but the many courts and offices that were about it made the whole a vast pile, and the exquisiteness of the art, and the fewness of the artists that could be employed about it, made a longer time requisite. It must be owned however, that, considering all things, Solomon made an extraordinary dispatch : For, if the building of Diana's temple at Ephesus employed all Asia for the space of two hundred years, and no less than three hundred and sixty thousand men, for twenty years together, were taken up in erecting one pyramid, (as Pliny, lib.

xxxvi.

was completed with dexterity, that neither * hammer, nor ax, nor any tool of iron was heard in it, all the while that it was building. Such admirable care and contrivance was used, in preparing and adjusting the materials, before they were brought together.

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

The O B J E C T I O N.

“ **B**UT how commendable soever the zeal both of David, and his son Solomon, to build the temple of the Lord, might be ; yet we are much in the wrong, if we think, that this would be any commutation for the blood and cruelty which the sacred historian seems to leave charged upon them.”

“ David had given Saul the most solemn assurance upon

xxxvi. c. 12. affirms), no reasonable man can wonder, that this temple was seven years and an half in building; *Pool's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

* The Jewish doctors have entertained a very odd conceit, upon the occasion of this passage in the sacred history, wherein the temple is said to have been built without noise. They tell us, that the Demon Asmodeus drove Solomon once from his throne, and reigned in his place, while that prince was forced to travel over the several kingdoms and provinces of the world ! but that, at his return to Jerusalem, he defeated Asmodeus, and having chained him so that he could do no hurt, he compelled him to teach him the art of cutting stones for the temple, without making any noise, which was done, as they say, not with any tool or instrument, but by the help of a worm, called *Samir*, which cuts and polishes stone with a marvellous facility. But the foundation of all this fiction (as Bochart, Hieroz. p 2. lib. vi. c. 11. has observed) is laid in somebody's mistaking the sense of the word *Samir*, which signifies a very hard stone, called *Smiris*, that is of use to cut and polish other stones, and which Solomon's workmen might possibly have recourse to upon this occasion. But the true reason why no noise was heard in the building of the temple was, that the stones, and all other materials, were hewn, and squared, and fitted at a distance ; so that when they were brought to the place where the temple was to stand, there was nothing to do but to join them together. And this might be done, not only for the ease and convenience of the carriage, but for the magnificence of the work, and the commendation of the workmen's skill and ingenuity ; *Pool's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Solomon*.

A. M. 2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

“ oath, that *(k)* he would not cut off his seed, nor destroy his name out of his father's house; he knew full well too, that it was an express command in the law, that *(l)* children should not be put to death for the father's, but that every man should be put to death for his own sin: And yet, notwithstanding this double obligation, we find him tamely giving up seven of Saul's innocent progeny (which he had promised to protect) into the hands of bloody-minded men, by them to be hung up as long as they thought fit, in order to atone for what Saul had done amiss, and to appease the wrath of God, as if he (like the idol Moloch) could be pleased with the tortures of the innocent, or took delight in the oblation of human blood.

“ Saul's family was very numerous indeed, and some of them might, in process of time, grow up to be another Ishbosheth to David, and give him some disturbance in his usurpation. It was highly necessary, therefore, to dispatch those of whom he might have any such apprehension, and (if any were to be left) to spare such only as were lame and impotent, and incapable to dispute his title. This, in all probability, was the motive of his shewing some favour to Mephibosheth, because *(m)* he was lame in both his feet; and yet he was minded to cut him short and keep him low, when he granted away his estate (without ever giving him a fair hearing) to a vile and perfidious servant; and, notwithstanding his clearing his character from every false aspersions thrown on it, still continuing the base informer in the full possession of half of it.

“ What the zeal of King *(n)* Saul to the children of Israel and Judah might be, that led him into the error of destroying the Gibeonites, we cannot tell; but surely it is unaccountable, why God did not immediately chastise him for it, instead of deferring his punishment, and at last transferring it to his posterity. His posterity perhaps might be justly included in his punishment; but what had the whole nation done to deserve a famine of three years continuance? * *That be far from thee, O Lord, to slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee; for shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

(k) 1 Sam. xxvi. 21. *(l)* Deut. xxiv. 16. *(m)* 2 Sam. ix. 13. *(n)* Ibid. xxi. 2. * Gen. xviii. 25.

“ We readily grant, that David’s resisting the importunity of his officers, and promising Shimei his life, when so many were ready to put him to death, was an act of great generosity, considering the heinousness of his crime; but this promise he utterly cancels, when he leaves it with his son, as his dying injunction, (o) *not to hold him guiltless, but to bring down his hoary head to the grave with blood*: nor can we conceive for what reason he, who durst not attempt to punish Joab in his life-time, should now, upon his death-bed, (a proper season for forgiveness), recommend the dangerous and ungrateful task to his son, (p) who was but young, and as yet unsettled on his throne.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Chriſt.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

“ Our blessed Saviour lays it down for a rule of good policy among princes, to keep an estimate of their forces; for (q) *What king going to war against another king, says he, sitteth not first down, and consulteth, whether he be able, with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?* And therefore, if David was minded to take an account of the military men in his kingdom, where was the great offence against God? David, who knew himself best, and with what purpose he numbered the people, might perhaps have reason to say *I have sinned, (r) I have done wickedly*; but his following words, viz. *these sheep what have they done?* are a sad imputation upon the divine justice; for, upon the presumption that they were innocent, how could they, with any justice, be punished with a raging pestilence for the transgression of their king?

“ The truth is, there are so many contradictions and inconsistencies in this whole story, (s) that there is no reconciling it to itself. In one place it is said, that (t) *God moved David to number Israel*; and in another, that (u) *Satan provoked him to it*; but it were highly profane and blasphemous, to say, that God conspired with Satan in this act, on purpose to destroy a multitude of innocent persons. In like manner to say, (x) *that there were in*

(o) 1 Kings ii. 9. (p) Calmet’s Commentary. (q) Luke xiv. 31. (r) 2 Sam. xxiv. 17. (s) Christianity as old as the cration, p. 266. (t) 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. (u) 1 Chron. xxi. 1. (x) 2 Sam. xxiv 9. The account in 1 Chron. xxi. 5. is much higher; for there it is said, that all they of *Israel were a thousand thousand, and an hundred thousand men, that drew the sword, and of Judah, four hundred threescore and ten thousand.*

A. M. 2981, &c. Ant. Christ. 1023, &c. from 2 Sam. xix. to 1 Kings viii.

“ *Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword, and in Judah five hundred thousand, besides women and children, old men that were unfit for war, and two entire tribes, that were not numbered, is a thing incredible. For (y) if in a nation, the men that are able to bear arms, are generally accounted the fifth part of it, the sum total of the ten tribes only that were numbered will amount to above six millions, which (together with the tribes unnumbered) will make up a multitude too large for so small a country as that of Canaan to maintain.*

“ What the constitution of the Jewish monarchy was, it is difficult to say: Kings, from the first, might have the right of nominating their successors; but certainly David would never have postponed his eldest son Adonijah, had he not been in his dotage, and therefore influenced by his wife to chuse her son Solomon; but after all, what great offence had Adonijah done, in desiring Abishag for his wife? or how does it appear, that by soliciting this alliance he affected to supplant Solomon of the kingdom? To have put him under some civil restraint, might have been excusable; but to take away his life upon that account, without any regular process or license given him to make his defence, was to the last degree arbitrary and tyrannical. Especially, considering that himself was never known to set any bounds to his love, and in marrying of Pharaoh’s daughter, had trampled upon a law, which obliged the king as well as the people, (z) to make no covenant, with idolatrous nations, nor to enter into marriages with them, for fear that their daughters should draw them aside, to go a-whoring after their gods, whereof himself was a notorious instance.

“ What the constitution of the Jewish church was, and how far subordinate to the civil power, it is no easy matter to determine; but Solomon seems to have transgressed his authority, when (a) he thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord, merely for advising Adonijah to marry the late king’s concubine. But well might the writer of his life extend the royal prerogative beyond its just bounds, when we find him so very lavish in his account of other matters, as quite to tran-

(y) Le Clerc in locum. (z) Exod. xxxiv. 16. and Deut. vii. 3, 4. (a) 1 Kings ii. 27.

“scend all possibility of truth. For what shall we say to his making Solomon hold a long conference with God in his sleep, and representing that as a divine revelation, which was only the result of an idle dream? What shall we say to the *thousand (b) burnt offerings*, which he makes him sacrifice at Gibeon, and all on one altar only, that was of no larger *(c) dimensions than five cubits square*? to the *forty thousands stalls* (some interpreters make them so many stables) for horses, which he gives him; and yet his horsemen are no more than *twelve thousand*? and to *(d) the fourteen hundred chariots of war* which he informs us he kept, when some of the greatest princes in after-ages had not half that number; and God’s general injunction to the king of Israel was, *(e) that he should not multiply horses to himself*?

A. M.
2981, etc.
Anc. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

“These are some of the faults and failings (to give them the softest term we can) of David and his son Solomon, whom the sacred historian endeavours to extol, though it be at the expence of some absurdities and self-contradictions. The most remarkable part of their story is their concern for the building of the temple at Jerusalem; and yet it is very justly to be questioned, whether in this they deserved any praise, or did God any real service, since *(f) the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands*, as the apostle testifies; for *(g) the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool*, saith the Lord, *where then is the house which ye build for me, or where is the place of my rest?*”

There is hardly any one passage in Scripture more difficult to give a satisfactory account of, than this relation of Saul’s cruelty to the Gibeonites; because we have little or no intimation, either when, or where, or why their slaughter was committed.

Answered,
by shewing
the occasion
of Saul’s
murdering
the Gibeon-
ites.

The Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but the remains of the Amorites, who, upon Joshua’s taking possession of the promised land, imposed upon him and his counsellours, and cunningly drew the Israelites into a league with them, which was instantly confirmed by an

(b) Ibid. iii. 4. (c) Patrick *in locum*. (d) *Vid.* 1 Kings iv. 26. and 2 Chron. ix. 25. (e) Deut. xvii. 16. (f) Acts vii. 48. (g) Isaiah lvi. 1.

A. M. 2981, &c. Ant. Christ. 1023, &c. from 2 Sam. xix. to 1 Kings viii. oath; and because it was so confirmed, for above three hundred years, was reputed inviolable. But though the Gibeonites, by their craft and fallacy, saved their lives, yet it was upon this condition, that they should (*h*) *become hewers of wood and drawers of water* for the service of the *tabernacle*. Now while the tabernacle was at Nob, which was a city of the priests, and where some of the Gibeonites, their attendants, may be supposed to reside, the sacred history informs us, that Saul, (*i*) in revenge to the priests, whom he took to be favourers of David's cause, destroyed the city, and massacred all the inhabitants thereof; so that several of the Gibeonites must have been slain upon this occasion, and for shedding of their blood this famine was sent. This is the account which some learned men give us of the matter: But they never considered, (*k*) that as Saul's sin in murdering the priests was greater than in slaying the Gibeonites, God should have inflicted this severe punishment upon the land for the greater sin, rather than the less. It has been said indeed, that for the slaughter of the priests, God had avenged himself on Saul before, by suffering him and his sons to be slain in battle by the Philistines, but that the slaughter of the Gibeonites was not as yet expiated; yet it will be difficult to conceive, why there should be two different and distinct punishments for one and the same sin, committed at the self-same time.

When, or by whom, or on what occasion, the tabernacle and altar of burnt-offerings, which were made by Moses in the wilderness, were removed from Nob to Gideon we cannot tell, because the Scripture is silent: But it is the conjecture of (*l*) some learned men, that it was not long after the murder of the priests at Nob; and that Saul, very probably to regain the favour of the people, which he found he had lost by being so barbarous to men of their sacred character, quarrelled with the Gibeonites, and banished them out of their city, in order to make room for the tabernacle of the Lord.

The Scripture indeed acquaints us, that (*m*) *he sought to slay the Gibeonites, in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah*; where the expression seems to denote, (*n*) that the children of Israel envied these miserable people,

(*h*) Josh. ix. 23. (*i*) 1 Sam xxii. 17. (*k*) Le Clerc's Commentary on 2 Sam. x i. 1. (*l*) Cal net's Commentary on 1 Sam. xxii. 19. (*m*) 2 Sam xxi. 2. (*n*) Le Clerc *in locum*.

in omuch

insomuch that Saul thought he could not do a more popular act, than to cut them off.

But by the children of Israel, (o) some rather understand the tribe of Benjamin in particular, viz. that very tribe from whence King Saul descended; and thence they infer, that his zeal, or earnest desire to promote his own tribe to riches and grandeur, made him seek occasion to fall foul upon the Gibeonites, in order that the three cities which they possessed in the territories of Benjamin might fall into his hands, and so be divided among his own family. That he either had, or intended to advance and enrich his own tribe, is manifest from these words of his:

(p) *Hear now, ye Benjamites, will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyard, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds?* i. e. will he do for you, as I have, and mean to do? Now, if we look into the actions of Saul, we do not find, that he made any purchase of the possessions of another tribe, or that he took from his enemies any considerable territories, in order to accommodate his Benjamites; and are therefore left to suppose, that the fields and vineyards wherewith he enriched them, he unjustly acquired by destroying and dispossessing the Gibeonites. It is but supposing, then, that some of the chief of these Gibeonites had, in some instance or other, offended Saul, for which he was minded to destroy the whole race; or that he had cast a greedy eye upon their lands and possessions, which, in case of their excision, would be forfeited to the crown, and so might be given to his own family; and then he had allegations plausible enough against them, pretending, “that it was not for the honour or interest of God’s people, to nourish any of that viperous brood in their bosoms; and that however Joshua and the princes, who then bore sway, had by their fraud been drawn into an oath to preserve them, yet, in truth, that oath was contrary to God’s command, which required them (q) to smite them, and utterly destroy them; and therefore ought not, as he thought, to be observed.”

Thus Saul might set up for a restorer of the divine laws to their ancient rigour, and strictness of execution, and a supplier of the default of Joshua, and the princes

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

How the
Israelit
might be-
come cul-
pable,

(o) The History of the life of King David, vol. iii. (p) 1 Sam. xxii. 7. (q) Deut. vii. 2.

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Chrif.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

of Israel, in fparing the Gibeonites, even though they were comprifed in the general ordinance of extirpation; and, under this character, he might eafily draw in his own fubjects to abet and affift his cruelty againft a poor people, for whom they had never any good liking. *Regis ad exemplum* is the known maxim; and therefore we may eafily fuppose, that a wicked and hard-hearted people, who had affifted Saul in the perfecution of David; had adhered to his fon Abfalom in his rebellion againft his own father; and who, at the beck of fo many impious princes, left the true worfhip of God, ad fell into idolatry; would not be backward to affift Saul in putting in execution any of his contrivances againft the poor Gibeonites. And if fo, we cannot but admire the wifdom and juftice of God, in making the punifhment national, when the whole nation (for aught we know) was confederate with Saul in murdering the Gibeonites, or guilty at leaft in not hindering it; when the next generation was involved in the guilt, by not repairing the injury as much as poffible, or not expreffing their horror and deteftation of it by fome public aft; when an aft of difcipline might, at this time, be neceffary, to preferve the remaining Gibeonites from infults, to beget in the Ifraelites a proper refpect for them, to prevent the like murders for the future, and the like breaches of national compacts.

and God
might juft-
ly punifh
them.

Nay, fupposing the people, who lived in that time when the famine prevailed, to be never fo innocent of the blood of the Gibeonites; yet it cannot be denied, but that God (who is the author and giver of life) has an abfolute right over the lives of all, and can recal that gift whenever he pleafes: And (r) therefore, if in the cafe before us, he made a demand (as certainly he had a right to do it) of fo many lives at fuch a time, and in fuch a manner, as might beft answer the ends of difcipline; then, that which was juft in other views, and without any fuch fpecial reafon, could not become unjuft, by having that additional reafon to recommend it. In a word, if the thing was righteous, confidered merely as an aft of dominion in God, it could not but be both righteous and kind, by being made, at the fame time, an aft of difcipline for the punifhment of fin and perfidy, and the promotion of juftnefs and godlinefs among men.

How Saul's
fons and
grandfons
might be
culpable,

We muft all allow, that God, as he is a moft juft and righteous being, can never require, that the innocent fhould

die for the guilty; and therefore we have reason to believe, that, when Saul (for reasons above mentioned) was so outrageous against the Gibeonites, his sons and grandsons might be instruments of his cruelty, and very probably bear some part in the military execution. For it frequently so happens, that whatever a king commands, be it never so abominable, is generally approved and executed by his family; and therefore, (s) when we are told from the mouth of God, that the plague sent upon the people, was *for Saul and his bloody house, because he † slew the Gibeonites*, it seems to be evident, that it was for their guilt as well as his; nor can we imagine, that this guilt of theirs could be any thing less than that of being the executioners in this slaughter. It is plain, that they were his captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds; and it is as plain, that, as such, they must be the instruments of his cruelty; for if they were not, why are they called *bloody*? They refused indeed (t) to slaughter the priests at his command, but there is no reason to believe, that they were so scrupulous in regard to the Gibeonites; and if they were not, is there less equity in God's destroying their sons for the sins of their fathers, which they adopted and shared in, than there was in his destroying Jehoram, the son of Ahab, for that vineyard which the father had cruelly and unjustly acquired, and the son as unjustly detained?

Without calling then to our assistance God's great prerogative, (u) of *visiting the sins of the father upon the children unto the third and fourth generation*, we may fairly say, that if these descendents of Saul did either concur in this murder of the Gibeonites, when doing, or avow and defend it when done, they became culpable upon their own, as well as their ancestor's account, and thereupon justly deserved to be delivered up to the resentment of a people that had suffered so much by their inhumanity.

Upon this supposition then, (for it is by suppositions that we must go in this obscure part of history), that both the people and the princes of the blood were accessory or instrumental to Saul's cruelty, the reason why God delayed long,

(s) The History of the life of King David, vol. iii.

† The word which we render *he slew*, might as properly be rendered *they slew*.

(t) 1 Sam. xxii. 17.

(u) Exod. xx. 5.

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

their punishment so long is obvious; even because his infinite goodness waited for their repentance, which goodness we badly requite, if we pervert it as an argument against his providence. For may not God be gracious and merciful as long as he pleases? Or have we any right to set bounds to his patience and long-suffering? It is but supposing then, that while God continued in this state of expectation, upon some special occasion or other, to us unknown, both the people of Israel and Saul's posterity might discover, that they were so far from repenting, that they gloried in the murder of the Gibeonites, and this would determine God, who had hitherto waited for their penitence in vain, to pour out his indignation upon them, and exact a severe punishment both for their cruelty and obstinacy.

The Gibeonites superstitious notions.

Whether the Gibeonites did right or wrong in exacting so severe a retaliation, as that of hanging up seven of Saul's progeny, for the injury that he and his family had done them, the sacred history is no ways concerned. It relates the transaction just as it happened; but to shew us from whence this barbarous custom of hanging up men to appease the anger of the gods did proceed, it prefaces the account of the matter with this observation:—(x) *These Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, (for among them they learnt no such practice) but a remnant of the Amorites, who were addicted to this horrid superstition, of which the Gibeonites notwithstanding their abode among people of better sentiments) still retained some tincture, and propounded it to David, as an expedient to make the earth become fruitful again: (y) Let seven of Saul's sons be given unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord.*

The reasons of God's exacting this punishment.

The Scripture, you see, speaks in the dialect of these people; but from thence we make a wrong conclusion, if we think that God can be delighted with human sacrifices, which so frequently, and so vehemently, we find him declaiming against, and professing his utter detestation of. He desires the death or punishment of no man, except it be in pursuance of the ends of his wise providence, or when the criminal, by his bad conduct, has forfeited his life to the government he lives under; nor would he have required the execution of any of Saul's posterity, had it

(x) 2 Sam. xxi. 2.

(y) Ibid. ver. 6.

not been to procure the poor distressed Gibeonites (who were true drudges to their Hebrew masters) a kinder treatment, and better quarter for the future; had it not been to testify his abhorrence of all oppression and violence; to shew that the cries of the meanest slave, as well as of the mightiest monarch, enter the ears of the Most High; that with him there is no respect of persons, but the rich and the poor to him are both alike; (z) had it not been to repair the injury done to his most holy name, in the violation of the compact which both Joshua and the princes of Israel made with this people, and confirmed with the solemnity of an oath; had it not been, by this exemplary punishment, to give mankind a lesson of instruction, concerning the sacredness of oaths and treaties, and how religiously they ought to be observed, even towards those that are in the lowest state and circumstances of life.

Under these considerations only could the death of Saul's sons be acceptable to God; and how far David, in like manner, came to be concerned in it, we shall now proceed to consider.

Both the Septuagint, and vulgar Latin translation make the demand of the Gibeonites, when David sent to offer them satisfaction, run in this strain:—(a) *The man who consumed us, and oppressed us unjustly, we ought utterly to destroy, so as not to leave one of his race remaining in any of the coasts of Israel*; and, in this demand, we may presume that they persisted, until David, partly by his authority, and partly by kind intreaties, prevailed with them to be content with seven only. Here then was a fair opportunity for David (had he been so minded) to have cut off the whole race of Saul as it were at one blow, and to have avoided all the odium of the action, by but barely saying, “That the Gibeonites demanded all, and his instructions from God were, to grant whatever they demanded.” But, instead of that, we find him, before this happened; making inquiry for such (b) *as were left of Saul's family, that he might shew kindness to them for Jonathan's sake*; interposing his good offices here with the Gibeonites, to have them abate the keenness of their resentment, and make the slaughter of Saul's devoted house as moderate as possible; and, after that slaughter

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix to
1 Kings viii.

That David had no design to destroy Saul's family;

(z) Calmet's Commentary in locum.
(b) Ibid. ix. 1.

(a) 2 Sam. xxi. 5.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

was over, (c) giving them a public and solemn interment, with the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son, in the sepulchre of their ancestors, and himself attending them in person to the grave.

The death of Saul's posterity, procured by the Gibeonites, had it not proceeded from God's positive command, but been only a plausible pretence for David to get rid of his rivals in empire, (d) we cannot imagine why he should slay no more than seven of these descendents; why he should cut off only collateral branches, and spare all those who were in a direct line of succession to the throne; why he spared Ishbosheth, his competitor for the kingdom, whom, by Abner's means, he might have dispatched, and according to their desert punished the two traitors who had officiously murdered him; and why he spared Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, and Micah his son, and Micah's four sons, (whom in all probability he lived to see), and in them (e) a long generation, all descended from Saul's family, and all related to the crown.

Had this affair of the Gibeonites happened indeed about the beginning of David's reign over all Israel, soon after the death of Ishbosheth, and when he had reason to apprehend, that some other rival might, perchance, spring up in his stead, there might then be some umbrage to think, that the branches of Saul's family were to be cut off for reasons of state, and to make his possession of the crown more safe: But, since these things came to pass very near the conclusion of his reign, when (as he himself acknowledges (f) in the very next chapter) God had not only covered him with the shield of his salvation, and so enlarged his steps under him, that his feet could not slip, but given likewise the necks of his enemies, and made him the head over many strange nations; he could have no just conception of danger from any quarter, and consequently no necessity to establish his throne by blood.

but was
compelled
to deliver
them.

It could not be then for any private end, that David delivered these children of Saul into the hands of the Gibeonites, but purely in obedience to the will of God, who had both directed and warranted him to do so. For we cannot but suppose, (as Josephus does) that, when David

(c) Ibid. xxi. 12, 13. (d) The History of the life of king David, vol. iii. (e) Vide 1 Chron. viii. 33. &c. (f) 2 Sam. xxii. 36, &c.

consulted the oracle concerning the famine, God informed him, not only for what crime it was inflicted, but by what means likewise it was to be removed: And therefore, being let into all this, he was not at liberty to do what he pleased, but compelled rather to give up the children as so many victims, notwithstanding his promise and oath to their father; because a superiour power interposed, and in so doing, cancelled the prior obligation.

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

His making a grant of Mephibosheth's estate to a vile miscreant of a servant, without giving his master a fair hearing, is another exception that is commonly made to the justice of King David's proceedings in this period of time. But how could David have leisure to send for Mephibosheth from mount Olivet to Jerusalem, and inquire into the merits of the cause depending between him and his servant, when he was in so great an hurry, and under flight from the arms of his rebel son? Or, how could he suppose that Ziba could have dared to have told him so notorious a lie, when it might, in a short time, be disproved? Every circumstance, in short, on Ziba's side, looked well; but none on the master's. To his master, David had been extremely kind in restoring to him the forfeited estate of his grandfather Saul, and in allowing him (*g*) to eat at his own table as one of the king's sons; and now, at the general rendezvous of his friends, David might well have expected, that the person, to whom he had extended so many favours, should not have been so negligent of his duty, as to absent himself, unless it had been upon some extraordinary business: And therefore, when Ziba acquaints him with the occasion of his absence, though it was a mere fiction, yet with David it might find a readier credence, because at this time he had reason to mistrust every body, and seeing his own family disconcerted and broken, might think the crown liable to fall to any new claimant, that could pretend to the same right of succession, that Mephibosheth might.

His granting away Mephibosheth's estate accounted for.

On the contrary, every thing appeared bright and plausible on Ziba's side. He, tho' but a servant, came to join the king, and, instead of adhering to his master's pretended schemes of advancement, had expressed his duty to his rightful sovereign, in bringing him a considerable present, enough to engage his good opinion. The story that he told of his master likewise, tho' utterly false, was cunningly

(*g*) 2 Sam. ix. 11.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 King: viii.

contrived, and firly accommodated to the nature of the times ; so that, in this situation of affairs, as wise a man as David might have been induced to believe the whole to be true, and upon the presumption of its being so, might have proceeded to pass a judgment of forfeiture (as in most eastern countries every crime against the state was always attended with such a forfeiture) upon Mephibosheth's estate, and to consign the possession of it to another.

All therefore that David can be blamed for in this whole transaction, is an error in judgment, even when he was imposed upon by the plausible tale of a sycophant, and had no opportunity of coming at the truth ; but upon his return to Jerusalem, when Mephibosheth appears before him, and pleads his own cause, we find this the decision of it :—(b) *Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land* : Which words must not be so understood, as if he appointed, at that time, an equal division of the estate, between Mephibosheth and his servant, (for where would the justice of such a sentence be ?), but rather that he revoked the order he had given to Ziba, upon the supposed forfeiture of his master, and put things now upon the same establishment they were at first. (i) *I have said*, i. e. “ My first grant shall stand, when “ I decreed, that Mephibosheth should be lord of the whole “ estate, and Ziba his steward to manage it for him.”

The words of the grant are these :—(k) *Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul, and to all his house. Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat*, i. e. may be enabled to maintain himself and family in plenty ; but *Mephibosheth, thy master's son, shall eat bread alway at my table*. From whence it seems manifest, that this Ziba had been an old steward in Saul's family, and had managed his private estate, which lay at Gibeah of Benjamin. (l) This estate, upon one account or other, had come into David's possession, either in right of his wife, upon the death of Saul's son, or by forfeiture to the crown, upon Ishbosheth's rebellion ; but he, being willing now to do a generous act to Saul's family, in memory of his friendship to

(b) Ibid xix. 29. (i) Selden, De successione 25. (k) 2 Sam. x. 10, 11. (l) Pool's Annotations in locum.

Jonathan,

Jonathan, passed a free grant or dedition of it to his son, and (that he might make a provision for all his dependents at once) put Ziba into the same place he had enjoyed before, constituting him † steward of the royal manour of Gibeah, even as he had been in the life of Saul. So that David's sentence or determination, (*m*) *Thou and Ziba divide the land*, refers us to this original grant, and consequently implies no more, than that all things should be in the same situation they were in before, *viz.* that Ziba, and his sons, should manage the estate, and support themselves out of it, as usual, and that the remainder of the profits which accrued from thence, they should bring to Mephibosheth, for him to dispose of as he pleased; and to this sense of the words the following reply seems to be accommodated, *yea, let him have all, (viz.) to his own use and property, since my Lord the King is come again in peace.*

That which leads many into a misconception of David, as if he left the world in a vindictive and unforgiving temper, (because we find him giving his son some instructions concerning two persons who had grossly misbehaved towards him), has been nothing else but the want of distinguishing between the same person, when acting or advising in a public, and when in a private capacity. Shimei curses David in the time of his troubles; and yet David forgives him, and promises he shall not die. Joab does many valourous and brave acts for the honour of his king, and the enlargement of his dominions; but then he sullies all with his insolent behaviour, and barbarous murders. They both had committed crimes enough to forfeit their lives; David however, for reasons of state, thought it not advisable to seize either of them for the present, but directed his son, if ever they should give him a sufficient provocation, not to spare them. “Thou hast Shimei with thee, “(*n*) and some share perhaps he may have in thy favour; “but trust him not, he is no friend to kings, or kingly “power. Remember what he did to me in my distress;

† The ancient way of tenancy (nor is it yet quite disused) was that of occupying the land, and giving the proprietor a certain annual proportion of the fruits of it: When the tenant paid one half of the annual produce, he was called *colonus partiaris*; and such, in the judgment of the best critics, was Ziba to Mephibosheth, as he had been before to Saul; *The history of the life of King David*, vol. iii.

(*m*) 2 Sam. xix. 29, 30. (*n*) Patrick's Commentary on 2 Kings ii. 8.

“ how

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

A. M. 2981, etc. Ant. Christ. 1023, etc. from 2 Sam. xix. to 2 Kings viii.

“ how bitterly, how virulently, he cursed me to my face ;
 “ and I make no doubt, but that he would be the same
 “ to thee in the like circumstances. I forgave him in my
 “ exile, because I looked upon him as an instrument in
 “ God’s hands to humble me for my great offence. I for-
 “ gave him in my return home, because he came to me
 “ when my heart was open, and unwilling to damp the joy
 “ of my restoration with the effusion of any blood. I pro-
 “ mised him his life ; and let not that promise he violated
 “ in my days : but what I did is no rule or obligation to
 “ thee. Let him not die however for his offence against
 “ me, but rather watch his conduct, and if he should
 “ chance to give thee a fresh occasion, be sure to lay hold
 “ of it, because it is not in his nature to be a good subject.
 “ Thou rememberest likewise what Joab did unto me ;
 “ with what insolence he treated me in the time of the war
 “ against Absalom ; how, contrary to my orders, he slew
 “ him, and afterwards talked to me in a menacing and im-
 “ perious manner. Thou rememberest what he did to A-
 “ mase, whom I intended to have put in his place, and
 “ made the general of all my forces ; and what to Abner,
 “ who was then endeavouring to gain over to my party all
 “ that adhered to the house of Saul. The injury done to
 “ these two brave men redounds upon me, since they
 “ were both under my protection, and both murdered,
 “ basely murdered, because I had an esteem for them ;
 “ and till justice be done to their murderer, (which I in my
 “ lifetime had not power to do), *(o) their innocent blood*
 “ *will not depart from my house.* Do thou therefore take
 “ care to foil it, and whenever he commits any trans-
 “ gression against thee, let the blood of these two valuable
 “ men be charged to his account, and let him, as he has
 “ long deserved, be put to death.”

This is the sense of David’s words to his son concern-
 ing these two men ; and it is easy to observe, that in these
 dying instructions of his, (*p*) he is not to be considered as
 a private man, acting upon principles of resentment, but as
 a king and governour, giving advice to his son and suc-
 cessor in affairs of state. It was for the public good,
 that such offenders, as Shimei and Joab, should suffer at a
 proper time, and as prudence should direct : and there-

(*o*) 1 Kings ii. 31. (*p*) Scripture vindicated, part 2. p. 106.

fore,

fore, since his promise and oath to one of them, and the formidable power and interest which the other had usurped, restrained him, in his lifetime, from punishing them as they deserved; and since it would have been an unjust thing in itself, and a derogation to the glory of his reign, to suffer such public and crying sins to go unpunished, he recommended the consideration of these things to his son, and, (q) like a wise magistrate, laid a scheme for the punishment of wickedness, without regard to any private revenge.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

David, as we said, durst not call Joab to an account, because his power and interest was so great in the army, (and it was the army that David, in a great measure, depended on), that it might have occasioned an alteration in the government, had he pretended to do it: But when Solomon came to the throne, Joab was not that mighty man he had formerly been. He was at least of an equal age with David; had commanded the armies of Israel for twenty years, and upwards; and as he was only formidable at the head of his troops, and in the times of war and public disorder; so (s) the profound peace which had subsisted for some time both before and after the beginning of Solomon's reign, had impaired his power, and made him in a manner useless. Upon this account, Solomon had not the like reason to fear him that his father had; nor did he lie under the like obligations to spare him. He had done David great services indeed, and a sufficient recompence it was, that he had been indulged for so many years with an impunity for his crimes; but whatever the father might be, the son was under no ties or obligations, especially when he found him conspiring to take away his kingdom, and translate it to another.

Why he left
Solomon to
punish
them.

Wherein the formality of David's sin in numbering the people (which, at first view, seems not to be so very heinous) did consist, it is not so well agreed among interpreters. (t) *When thou takest the number of the children of Israel, says God to Moses, after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them:* Upon which passage Josephus, and some others, have founded this conjecture; — That David had quite

David's sin
in number-
ing the peo-
ple, what.

(q) Calmet's and Le Clerc's commentaries on 1 Kings ii.
(s) Calmet's Commentary. (t) Exod. xxx. 12.

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

forgot to demand of every man, that was mustered, an half shekel, which was appointed by the law, and is here called *a ransom for his soul*; and therefore God sent among the people a pestilence; because amidst the great plenty and abundance which they now enjoyed, it was a very impious and provoking thing not to pay him his dues. (u) But where do we find, that upon every numbering of the people, an half shekel was ordered to be paid? It was in this case only, when the people were to contribute towards the building of the tabernacle, and God threatens those who should refuse to do it; but this has no manner of relation to what David did, who no where stands charged with such an omission, (x) any more than with a design of raising a capitation-tax (as others conceive) upon every poll through the kingdom.

Others are of opinion, that this numbering of the people was a thing contrary to the fundamental promise which God made Abraham, viz. that his seed should so increase, as even to exceed the stars in multitude; and therefore, since God had promised to increase them beyond number, it favoured of infidelity and distrust in God, for any one to go about to number them: But, quite contrary to this, the Scripture, in another place, tells us, that David (out of a religious regard to the promise of God) never intended to take an exact number of all, but of such only as were fit to bear arms; for so the words are, (y) *He took not the number of them, from twenty years old and under, because the Lord hath said, he would increase Israel, like to the stars of the heavens.*

The most common therefore, and indeed the only probable opinion is, that this act of David's proceeded (z) from pride and ambition, and a foolish curiosity to know the number of his subjects, the strength of his forces, and the extent of his empire: As if all these had greatly contributed to his glory and renown; as if they had been of his own acquiring, and more proper to place his confidence in, than the power and assistance of him whose protection he had so long experienced; whom, upon other occasions, he was wont to call his ~~rock~~, his shield, and castle of defence; and who was able, at all times, to save with a handful of men, as well as a multitude.

(u) Calmet's Commentary *in locum*. (x) Patrick *in locum*.
(y) 1 Chron. xxvii. 23, 24. (z) Calmet's Commentary *in locum*.

Pride then, and an arrogant conceit of himself (which is always attended with a forgetfulness of God), was at the bottom of David's numbering the people; and indeed so visible to others, as well as to the all-seeing eye of God, that we find Joab (who was then of his privy-council) thus remonstrating against it: (a) *Now the Lord thy God add unto thy people (how many soever they be) an hundred fold, and that the eyes of my Lord the King may see it; but why doth my Lord the king delight in this thing?*

It is a judicious observation of the apostle, (b) *Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot tempt with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away with his own lust, and enticed:* and therefore it may justly be reckoned a peculiar elegance in the Hebrew tongue, that it frequently leaves out the nominative noun to a verb active, which, when it happens, the accusative following supplies the place of the nominative that is wanting. This shows that our translators have made a gross mistake in rendering the passage, *the Lord moved David to number Israel and Judah*, because in the original there is no such thing as *the Lord*; for the nominative is omitted, as I said, and the accusative, supplying its place, makes the sense simply *David was moved* (by what is not named, but by his pride and vanity, we may say, as well as (c) the instigations of the devil) *to number the people*. So that there is no contradiction in the Scripture-account of this transaction, no appearance of a confederacy between God and Satan; nor was God any farther concerned in it, than as his providence, for wise ends, thought proper to permit it.

"But if David only was culpable in this affair, why did not God immediately punish him for it, instead of falling upon the people, who were confessedly innocent?"

The generality perhaps were innocent as to the affair of numbering the people: That might be chiefly David's sin; but in other respects they were not. They had many great and grievous sins, which justly deserved punishment, and for which probably they would have been punished before, had it not been for God's tenderness to David, who must have been a sufferer in the common calamity; but now, when both king and people had deserved correction, God was pleased to let loose his anger upon both. David, indeed, was not smitten in person, but a king is never more

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

Why God
sent this pe-
silence upon
the people,

(a) 2 Sam xxiv. 3. (b) James i. 13, 14. (c) 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

sensibly punished, than when the judgment of God fall upon his people, and diminishes their number, and their strength. For the body politic is not unlike the body natural; no sooner does the head suffer, but all the members suffer with it; nor can the least part of the body be in pain, but the head is immediately affected: And therefore we need not doubt, but that David, when he saw (d) the angel stretching out his hand upon Jerusalem, to destroy it, and thereupon broke out into this exclamation, *Let thy hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house*, had his heart as full of grief and anxiety as any one that lay languishing in the plague.

and not on
David.

Thus, in all the afflictions of his people, David was afflicted: And if this fore judgment beset the nation a little while before Absalom's rebellion, (as some have suspected a mis-location in this part of the history), this may suggest a reason why God might think fit to preserve David, and not cut him off as he deserved, for his sin; (e) that the dissention which might have arose among his sons, about the right of succession in case of his death, and the foreign and domestic wars that would thereupon have ensued, and * proved more fatal to the Israelites, than this destroying pestilence; might, by David's life, and interposition, be prevented. And from the sense of this, very probably, it is, that we find him commemorating his deliverance from this public calamity, in such exalted strains, as make it disputable, whether their piety or poetry are more remarkable. (f) *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flyeth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, or for the destruction that wasteth at noon day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right-hand, but it shall not come nigh thee.*

The difference in the book of Samuel, and that of Chronicles reconciled,

It must be owned indeed, that there is a very large difference in the Scripture-accounts of the number of

(d) 2 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. (e) Le Clerc's Comment. *in locum*.

* The character which Livy gives us of such factions and dissensions, is conceived in these words: "Fuere, eruntque pluribus populis magis exitio, quam bella externa, quam fames, morbive, quæque alia in numinis iras, velut ultima publicorum malorum, vertunt;" *lib. iv.*

(f) Psal. xci. 1, &c.

men, fit to bear arms, that were found in David's dominions : (g) In Samuel it is said, that they were in Israel eight hundred thousand, and in Judah five hundred thousand ; but in (h) Chronicles, they of Israel were a thousand thousand, and an hundred thousand, and they of Judah four hundred threescore and ten thousand ; and various attempts have been made to adjust and settle this disagreement. Some suppose, that, as Joab undertook this office with no small reluctance, and David, very probably, might repent of the thing, before it was fully executed, though the commissioners might make an exact review, (i) yet they thought proper to lay before the King no more than what the sum in Samuel amounts to ; but that the author of the book of Chronicles might, from some of these commissioners, receive the complete sum, which occasioned the difference.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Aut. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

(k) Others imagine, that this difference arises from the legionary soldiers, (as they are called), or those companies of militia which attended the King's person by turns, and might make the number either greater or less, according as they were numbered, or not numbered, in the account : But this solution is purely arbitrary, and such as has no foundation in Scripture. It supposes withal, that the real number was what is recorded in Chronicles, which, taking in the several articles that are said to be omitted, surpasses all faith.

Since there is then no possibility of reconciling these different computations, the question is, Which of the two we are to receive ? And this, without all controversy, must be that in Samuel, not only because the Arabic translators, in their version of the Chronicles, have inserted it, but because there is nothing excessive, or extravagant, in the supposition, that, in a fertile and well-cultivated country of sixty leagues in length, and thirty in breadth, a multitude of people, to the number of six or seven millions, (which, taking in the other articles, will be the sum total), might very comfortably be maintained. (l) Rather, then, than have recourse to such solutions as do but more embarrass the matter, we may adventure to say, without any diminution to the Scripture's authority, that the excessive number

(g) 2 Sam. xxiv. 9. (h) 1 Chron. xxi. 5. (i) Ibid. xxvii. 24. (k) Vide Calmet's Commentary on 2 Sam. xxiv. 9. (l) Le Clerc's Commentary *in locum*.

A. M. in the Chronicles was a mistake of the person, who, after
 2981, &c. the captivity, transcribed this part of the sacred writ;
 Ant. Christ. "Nam non dubito" (says Sulpicius, (m) in his sacred hi-
 1023, &c. story) "librariorum potius negligentia, præsertim tot jam
 from 2 Sam. xix. to "sæculis intercedentibus, veritatem fuisse corruptam, quam
 1 Kings viii. "ut propheta erraverit."

Why David
 made Solo-
 mon his
 successor.

It must be acknowledged, that, in most nations, where the regal power was at this time established, the right of succession was generally hereditary, and the eldest son seldom (except in cases of incapacity) postponed. This is what Adonijah urges to Bathsheba; (n) *Thou knowest, that the kingdom was mine by right of primogeniture, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign*: But then, there was this peculiar to the Jewish constitution, that, as God had been their only king from the time that they first became a nation, so, when they thought fit to have that form of government altered, he still reserved to himself the right of nominating the successor, when the throne became vacant: (o) *When thou art come unto the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are about me, thou shalt by all means make him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose*. So that, when God had declared his pleasure concerning the person that was to succeed him, (as he did by the prophet Nathan), David was not at liberty to make choice of any other.

We do not dispute at all, but that Bathsheba, who was his favourite wife, had a great ascendancy over her husband; but Solomon's title was not founded upon her interest and management with the king, but upon the ordination and appointment of God. (p) *Of all my sons, says David, (for the Lord hath given me many sons), he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel*; and therefore Adonijah himself acknowledges, (q) *that it was of the Lord, that the kingdom was turned about, and become his brother's*.

Nathan indeed puts Bathsheba upon another argument, viz. the sacredness of the King's oath, in order to prevail with him in behalf of her son: (r) *Didst not thou swear*

(m) Lib. i. (n) 1 Kings ii. 15. (o) Deut. xvii. 14, 15.
 (p) 1 Chron. xxviii. 5. (q) 1 Kings ii. 15. (r) 1 Kings
 i. 13. 2 Sam. xii. 24.

unto thy handmaid, saying, *Affuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne?* But at what time this promise was made, is a matter of some dispute. The generality of interpreters are of opinion, that, after the death of the first child which David had by Bathsheba, he comforted her for her loss, and gave her assurance, that, if God should give him another son by her, he would not fail to make him his successor. But it is much more probable, that David did not make any declaration of a promise to Bathsheba, until God had revealed it to him, (s) that he should have a son, distinct from what he had already, who should succeed him in the kingdom, and have the honour of building him a temple; and no sooner was Solomon born, but David was convinced that this was the child to whom the promise belonged, by Nathan's being sent to give him a name, denoting his being (t) *beloved of the Lord*: And it was at this time, most probably, that David gave his mother a promise, confirmed upon oath, that, since God had so manifestly declared in favour of the child, he, for his part, would do his utmost to facilitate his succession. But, upon the whole, he did not chuse for himself, (u) neither was his declaration to Bathsheba previous to Nathan's information, but rather the effect and consequence of it.

But even suppose there had been no divine interposition in favour of Solomon, why might not David, who had done such signal service in his reign, nominate his successor? (x) Several great princes in most nations have claimed this privilege. Among the Romans, Aurelius named Nerva, and Nerva chose Trajan, and so did Augustus appoint his successor. And, that this was a prerogative belonging to the crown of Israel, and what continued with it for some time after David, is evident from the story of his grandson Rehoboam, (y) who, though a prince of no great merit, took upon him the authority of nominating his successor, and, to the prejudice of his eldest son, made one of his youngest sons king.

Far are we from vindicating Solomon in all his actions, any more than David in the matter of Uriah. His severity to his brother, for a seemingly small offence,

(s) 1 Chron xxii. 9, 10. (t) The name was Jedidiah, 2 Sam. xii. 25. (u) Calmet's Commentary *in locum*. (x) Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings i. 20. (y) 2 Chron. xi. 21, 22.

A. M. 2981, etc. looked like revenge, and as if he had taken the first opportunity to cut him off, for his former attempt upon the kingdom : and yet we cannot but imagine, (z) from Solomon's words to his mother, *Why dost thou ask Abishag for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also, for he is mine elder brother*, that there was some farther conspiracy against him, (though not mentioned in holy writ), whereof he had got intelligence, and wherein Joab and Abiathar were engaged ; and that he looked upon this asking Abishag in marriage as the prelude to it, and the first over-act, as it were, of their treason. It is certain, that they thought to impose upon the king, as they had done upon his mother, and carry their point, without ever discovering the malevolent intent of it.

The wives of the late King (according to the customs of the east) belonged to his successor, and were never married to any under a crowned head. (a) Abishag was doubtless a beautiful woman, and, by near relation to David, might have a powerful interest at court ; Adonijah might therefore hope, by this marriage, to strengthen his pretensions to the crown, or, at least, to lay the foundation for some future attempt, upon a proper opportunity, either if Solomon should die, and leave a young son not able to contest the point with him, or if, at any time, he should happen to fall under the peoples displeasure, as his father had done before him.

This might be Adonijah's design, and Solomon accordingly might have information of it : But supposing that his brother's design was entirely innocent, yet, since his request (according to the customs then prevailing) was confessedly bold and presumptuous, and had in it all the appearance of treason, (b) it was none of Solomon's business to make any farther inquiry about it, or to interpret the thing in his brother's favour. It was sufficient for him, that the action was in itself criminal, and of dangerous consequence to the state ; for it is by their actions, and not intentions, that all offenders must be tried.

Adonijah indeed, had he lived under our constitution, would have had a fair hearing before conviction : but we ought to remember that, in the kingdoms of the east, the government was absolute, and the power of life or death

(z) 1 Kings ii. 22.

(a) Pool's Annotations on 1 Kings ii. 22.

(b) Calmet's Commentary *in locum*.

entirely in the prince; so that Solomon, without the formality of any process, could pronounce his brother dead: And, because he conceived, that, in cases of this nature, delays were dangerous, might send immediately, and have him dispatched; though we cannot but say, that it had been more to his commendation, had he shewed more clemency, and spared his life.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

And in like manner, had he not married his Egyptian queen, there might be less objected to his character: For, whatever augmentation of power he might promise himself from that alliance, (c) he certainly ran the hazard of having his religion corrupted by this unlawful mixture. Others however have observed, that as the sacred Scriptures commend the beginning of Solomon's reign, in all other respects, except the (d) *peoples sacrificing in high places*, which might be the rather tolerated, *because, there was no house built unto the name of the Lord in those days*; and, as they give him this character, (e) *that he loved the Lord, and walked in all the statutes of David his father*, he would never have done an act so directly contrary to the laws of God, as marrying an idolatrous princess, had she not been first proselyted to the Jewish faith. The Scripture indeed takes notice of the gods of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Zidonians, for whom Solomon, in compliance to his strange wives, built places of worship: But as there is no mention made of any gods of the Egyptians, it seems very likely, that this princess, when she was espoused to Solomon, quitted the religion of her ancestors, to which these words in the psalm, supposed to be written upon this occasion, (f) *Hearken, O my daughter, forget thine own people, and thy father's house, so shall the king have pleasure in thy beauty, for he is the Lord*, are thought by some to be no distant allusion. However this be, it is certain, that we find Solomon no where reprov'd in Scripture for this match; (g) nor can we think, that his book of Canticles (which is supposed to be his epithalamium) would have found a place in the sacred canon, had the spouse, whom it all along celebrates, been at that time an idolatress; though there is reason to believe, that she afterwards relapsed into her ancient religion, and contributed, as much as any, to the king's seduction, and the many great disorders that were in the latter part of his reign.

(c) Vid. 1 Kings xi. (d) 1 Kings iii. 2. (e) Ibid. ver. 3. (f) Psal. xlv. 10, 11. (g) Calmet's Commentary on 1 Kings iii. 1.

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.
and de-
grade Abia-
thar.

How far the high-priest, Abiathar, was concerned in the plot against Solomon, the sacred history does not particularly inform us; but such was the reverence paid to the sacerdotal character, that Solomon would have hardly dared to have deposed such an one from his office, had not the constitution of the nation authorised him so to do. The kings in the east, indeed, soon found out ways to make themselves absolute; but it looks as if, at the first establishment, the king was at the head of the Hebrew republic, and the high-priest his subject, and in all civil affairs submitted to his correction; (*b*) insomuch, that when any one abused the power of his office to the prejudice of the commonweal, or endangering the king's person, the king might justly deprive him of his honours and titles, of his temporalities and emoluments, and even of life itself. And therefore, when Abiathar, by his conspiracy, had merited all this, whatever was dependent on the crown, (as all the revenues of this place, as well as the liberty of officiating in it, were dependent), Solomon might lawfully take from him; but the sacerdotal character, which he received from God, and to which he was anointed, this he could not alienate: and therefore we may observe, that after his deprivation, and even when Zadok was in possession of his place, he is nevertheless still mentioned (*i*) under the style and title of *the Priest*.

The truth is, there is a great deal of difference between depriving man of the dignity, and of the exercise of his function in such a determinate place; and between taking from him an authority that was given him by God, and the profits and emoluments arising from it, which were originally the gift of the crown. The former of these Solomon could not do, and the latter, it is probable, he was the rather incited to do, out of regard to the prophecy of Samuel, wherein he foretold Eli, (from whom Abiathar was descended), that he would translate the priesthood from his to another family, as he did in the person of Zadok, who was of the house of Eleazar, even as Eli was of that of Ithamar; so that, by this means, the priesthood reverted to its ancient channel.

The different accounts in Kings and Chronicles reconciled. In the account which we have of Solomon's sumptuous manner of living, (*k*) we read in the book of Kings, that he had *forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots*;

(*b*) Calmet's Commentary on 1 Kings ii. 27.

(*k*) Ibid. ver. 26.

(*i*) 1 Kings

but

(*l*) but in that of Chronicles it is said, that he had no more than four; and yet in this some will acknowledge no disagreement at all. The author of Samuel, say they, speaks of the horses; the author of the Chronicles of the stalls or stables, which, supposing every one to contain ten horses, answer the number exactly. It is observable, however, that the history makes mention (*m*) of chariot-cities, *i. e.* cities wherein Solomon kept chariots and horsemen in several parts of his kingdom, for the security of his government, and the suppression of any disorder that might happen to arise; and therefore others have thought, that in the Chronicles, the author speaks of those stalls which Solomon had at Jerusalem for his constant life-guard, and were no more than four thousand; but in Kings, of all those stalls which were dispersed up and down in the several parts of his kingdom, which might be forty thousand: because, upon the account of the conquests, which his father had made on the east-side of Jordan, it was necessary for Solomon to have a stronger armament of this kind than other kings before him had, in order to keep the people, that would otherwise be apt to rebel, in due subjection.

But, without any prejudice to the authority of the Scriptures, why may we not own, that an error has possibly crept into the text through the negligence of some transcriber, who has inserted *Arbahim*, *i. e.* forty, instead of *Arbah*, four, and so made this large disparity in the number? Four thousand stalls (supposing each stall for a single horse) are moderate enough; but forty thousand is incredible: And therefore (to proportion the horses to the chariots, (*n*) which were a thousand and four hundred) we may suppose, (*o*) with the learned author, from whom we have borrowed this conjecture, that of these chariots some were drawn with two, some with three, and some with four horses. Now if the chariots were drawn with a pair only, the number of Solomon's chariot-horses must be two thousand eight hundred; if by two pair, then it must be five thousand six hundred; but the medium between these two numbers is very near four thousand; and therefore it seems most likely, that the horses which the king kept for this use only, might be much about this number. Too many for the law to tolerate; (*p*) but the king perhaps

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

(*l*) 2 Chron. ix. 25. (*m*) Ibid. (*n*) 1 Kings x. 26. (*o*) *Vid.*
Bochart Hieros. Part. I. lib. ii. c. 9. (*p*) Deut. xvii. 16.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

Solomon's
1000 sacri-
fices on one
altar ;

might have as little regard to this clause in the law, as he had to the following one, which forbade him (*q*) *to multiply wives and concubines to himself, or greatly to multiply silver or gold.*

The only remaining difficulty (except the divine vision vouchsafed Solomon, which has not been mentioned) is the great quantity of sacrifices which he is said to have offered on one altar only ; but without recurring to any miracle for this, or without supposing that this fire, which originally came from heaven, was more strong and intense than any common fire ; and therefore, after the return from the captivity, the altar (as some observe) was made larger, because there wanted this celestial flame : without any forced solution like this, we have no reason to think, that all these sacrifices were offered in one day. The king, (we may imagine), upon one of the great festivals, went in procession with his nobles, to pay his devotion at Gibeon, where the tabernacle was, and the brazen altar which Moses had made. Each of the great festivals lasted for seven days ; but Solomon might stay much longer at Gibeon, until, by the daily oblations, a thousand burnt-offerings were consumed ; and, at the conclusion of this course of devotion, he might offer up his ardent prayer to God for wisdom ; and God, for the confirmation of his faith, might appear to him in a dream by night, and have that converse with him which the Scripture takes notice of.

and his di-
vine vision,
both pro-
bable.

(*r*) Sleep indeed is like a state of death to the soul, wherein the senses are locked up, and the understanding and will deprived of the free exercise of their functions ; and yet this is no impediment to God in communicating himself to mankind : for (*s*) *God speaketh once, yea twice, (says the author of the book of Job) in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction :* For God, no doubt, has power, not only to awaken our intellectual faculties, but to advance them above their ordinary measure of perception, even while the body is asleep.

(*t*) A very eminent father of the Greek church, speaking of the different kinds of dreams, has justly observed,

(*q*) Le Clerc's Commentary on 1 Kings iv. 26. (*r*) Calmet's Commentary on 1 Kings iii. (*s*) Job. xxxiii. 14. (*t*) Gregory, De officio hominis, c. xiii.

that

that the organs of our body, and our brain, are not unlike the strings of a musical instrument. While the strings are screwed up to a proper pitch, they give an harmonious sound, if touched by a skilful hand; but as soon as they are relaxed, they give none at all. In like manner, while we are awake, (says he), our senses, touched and directed by our understanding, make an agreeable concert; but when once we are asleep, the instrument has done sounding, unless it be, that the remembrance of what passed, when we are awake, comes and presents itself to the mind, and so forms a dream, just as the strings of an instrument will for some time continue their sound, even after the hand of the artist has left them. It is no hard matter to apply this to Solomon's dream. He had prayed the day before with great fervency, and desired of God the gift of wisdom. In the night-time God appeared to him in a dream, and bid him ask whatever he would. Solomon, having his mind still full of the desire of wisdom, asked it, and obtained it: So that the prayer, or desire, which he uttered in his dream, was but the consequence of the option he had made the day before, when he was awake.

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

In a word, though we should allow that the soul of man, when the body is asleep, is in a state of rest and inactivity; yet we cannot but think, that God can approach it many different ways; can move and actuate it just as he pleases; and when he is minded to make a discovery of any thing, can set such a lively representation of it before the eyes of the man's understanding, as shall make him not doubt of the reality of the vision.

Solomon indeed, at the consecration of the temple, owns, that *(u)* *the heaven of heavens could not contain God, and much less then the house that he had built him*: but it will not therefore follow, that there is no necessity for places appropriated to divine worship, nor any occasion for making them so magnificent and sumptuous. That God, who is the author and giver of our being, and to whom we are indebted for every thing we have, and every thing we hope for, should be constantly attended with the homage and adoration, with the praises and acknowledgments of his creatures (his own dependent creatures) is a position that will admit of no controversy; and that there should be some places appointed for this purpose, that all the offi-

As his
building of
the temple
was com-
mendable.

(u) 1 Kings viii. 27.

A, M. ces of religion may be performed with more decency, and
 2981, &c. more solemnity, is another position that seems to arise
 Ant. Christ. from the nature of the thing. These buildings we style
 1023, &c. from the *houses of God*; but it is not to defend him (as Arnobius
 from 2 Sam. (x) speaks) from heat or cold, from wind or rain, or tem-
 xix. to pests, that we raise such structures, but to put ourselves in
 1 Kings viii. a capacity of paying our duty to him, and of nourishing
 in our hearts such sentiments of respect and reverence, of
 love and gratitude, as are due from creatures to their great
 Creator.

In these places, God is said to be more immediately present, to hear our supplications, receive our praises, and relieve our wants; and therefore, to make his habitation commodious, David exhorts his subjects to a liberal contribution, and *Because I have a joy*, says he, *in the house of my God, I have, of mine own gold and silver, given three thousand talents of gold, even the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of fine silver.* “ He indeed makes mention
 “ (as the learned (y) Hooker, with whose words I conclude this argument, has observed) of the natural convenience, that such kind of bounteous expences have,
 “ since thereby we not only testify our cheerful affection to God, which thinks nothing too dear to be bestowed
 “ about the furniture of his service, but give testimony to the world likewise of his almightiness, whom we
 “ outwardly honour with the chiefest of outward things, as being, of all things, himself incomparably the greatest.
 “ To set forth the majesty of kings, his vicegerents here below, the most gorgeous and rare treasures that the
 “ world can afford are procured; and can we suppose, that God will be pleased to accept what the meanest of
 “ these would disdain? In a word, though the true worship of God, (says he), be to God in itself acceptable, who
 “ respects not so much in what place, as with what affection he is served; yet manifest it is, that the very majesty and
 “ holiness of the place where God is worshipped, hath, in regard of us, great virtue, force, and efficacy, as it is a
 “ sensible help to stir up devotion, and, in that respect, bettereth, no doubt, our holiest and best actions of that kind.”

(x) Contra Gent. lib. 6.

(y) Eccles. Polity, lib. 5.

DISSERTATION V.

Of the ancient Jerusalem, and its Temple.

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

IT is an opinion vulgarly received, and not without much probability, that Jerusalem is the same city which (z) elsewhere is called *Salem*, and whereof Melchisedeck is said to have been king. Not that Salem, or the city of Melchisedeck, was of equal extent with Jerusalem in after-times; but Jerusalem was no other than the city of Salem enlarged and beautified by the kings of all Israel, at first by David and Solomon, and after that by the succeeding kings of Judah, when the monarchy came to be divided into two distinct kingdoms.

Its name,
and situa-
tion.

The word *Salem*, in the Hebrew language, (a) signifies *peace*: And as the city of Melchisedeck, called *Salem*, is probably thought to be the same with Jerusalem; so it is certain, that Jerusalem was (b) otherwise called *Jebus*, and therefore as it preserves the name of Salem in the latter, so it is thought to preserve the name of Jebus in the former part of it, and to be nothing else but a compound of Jebus and Salem, which for the better sound's sake, by the change of one letter, and the omission of another, is softened into Jerusalem.

Whether this city stood in the centre of the world or no, we shall not pretend to determine, though some † very

(z) Gen. xiv. 18. (a) Heb. vii. 2. (b) Compare Josh. xv. 8. with 1 Chron. xi. 4.

† To this purpose they observe, that the sacred writers are very well acquainted with this, as appears by that passage of Ezekiel, chap. v. 5. *Thus saith the Lord God, This is Jerusalem; I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries round about her.* For what purpose he did this, the Psalmist has not been wanting to inform us: *Out of Sion, says he, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined*, Psal. l. 2. Here the Almighty kept his court, and from hence he sent out his ambassadors, the prophets, to publish his decrees to the whole world around him, with more ease and speedier conveyance, than could possibly be done from any other region of the habitable world. From hence, as from a central point, the light of the law at first, and the gospel afterwards, shone out to the surrounding nations; and therefore we find Jerusalem emphatically called *the city of our God, the mountain of his holiness, beautiful for situation, and the joy of the whole earth*, Psal. xlviii. 1, 2.; the history of the life of King David, vol. ii.

zealously

A. M. 2981, etc.
 Ant. Christ.
 1023, etc.
 from 2 Sam.
 xix. to
 1 Kings viii.

zealously contend for it ; since it is a matter of more material disquisition, in what tribe it may be supposed to have been situated. In the conquest of the land of Canaan, and at the famous battle of Gibeon, (c) Joshua put to death the king of Jerusalem, and, very probably, took the city, though, by some means or other not mentioned in Scripture, the Jebusites afterwards got possession, and continued their possession even till the days of David. In the division of the land, it was apparently one of those cities which (d) were given to the tribe of Benjamin ; and yet when we read, that at one time (e) *the children of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites*, and, at another, (f) *that the children of Judah took and burnt Jerusalem*, one would be tempted to think, that it lay within the limits of that tribe : But then this difference may be easily reconciled, if we will but consider, that as this city was built on the frontiers of both tribes, it is sometimes made a part of the one, and sometimes of the other ; that by Joshua's division of the country, Benjamin had most right to it, but, by the right of conquest, Judah ; however, when it came to be made the metropolis of the whole nation, it was thought to belong to the Israelites in common, and therefore was claimed by neither.

The city of Jerusalem was built upon two hills, and encompassed all round with mountains. It was situated in a barren and stony soil ; but the places adjacent were well watered, having the fountains of Gihon and Siloam, and the brook Kidron at the foot of its walls. Jebus, or the ancient city which David took, was seated on a hill towards the south ; and, on the opposite quarter, towards the north, was mount Sion, where David built a new † city, and called it after his own name, and where stood

(c) Josh. x. 23, 40. and xii. 10. (d) Josh. xviii. 28. (e) Josh. xv. 63. (f) Judg. i. 8.

† This city was of a circular form, situated on a much higher hill, and surrounded with a broad, deep trench, hewn (whether by art or nature) out of a natural rock. This trench was defended by a wall of great strength, erected upon its inner edge, and this wall was, in like manner, defended and beautified with strong and square towers, at regular distances ; which towers are said to have been built of white marble, the lowest 60, and the highest 120 cubits high, but all exactly of one level on the top, although in themselves of very different heights, according to the declivity of the ground on which they stood, *The History of the life of King David, vol. ii.*

his royal palace likewise †, and the temple of the Lord; ^{A. M. 2981, &c.} for the temple was built upon mount Moriah, which was ^{Ant. Christ. 1023, &c.} one of the hills belonging to mount Sion.

Between these two mountains lay the valley of Millo, ^{from 2 Sam. xix. to 1 Kings viii.} which formerly separated ancient Jebus from the city of David, but was afterwards filled up by David and Solomon, to make a communication between the two cities: But besides this valley of Millo we read in Scripture of (g) the house of Millo, which is said to be (h) in the city of David, and therefore was built either upon mount Sion, or some adjacent place. Let us then inquire a little what this house of Millo might possibly be.

Millo, considered in its etymology, is thought to be de- ^{Its build- ings.} duced from a root which signifies *to be full*, and is therefore, in the sacred history, supposed to denote a large capacious place, designed for public meetings, or, in short, a senate-house. That this was some public edifice, I think, may be inferred from the notice that is taken of it among some other of Solomon's public buildings, where the reason of the tax, which he levied upon his subjects, is said to be this, ——— (i) *That he might build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Millo, and the walls of Jerusalem, &c.*; for since we find it joined with the

† The tower which went under the name of David, was situated upon the utmost angle of mount Sion, and the beauty and fine proportion of this fabric, as well as the use that was made of it, may be fairly inferred from that famous comparison of Solomon's: *Thy neck is like the tower of David, built for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men*, Cant. iv. 4. *The tower of furnaces*, which probably had its name from the many fires that were lighted up in it at once, answered all the ends of a Pharos, or watch-tower, both to land and sea. By the advantage of its situation, it could not fail of being an excellent light-house both to the Mediterranean and Red-sea, and was probably so contrived, as to illuminate a great part of the city likewise; and, in that respect, was not only a glorious ornament, but of excellent use. *The house of the mighty* was a palace erected by David, in honour of his worthies, or chieftains in war, in which they had apartments, according to their reputation and merit in arms, were always ready at hand, for counsel or aid, as the king's affairs required, and at leisure-hours, by superintending and instructing the youth in their military exercises, answered all the purposes of a royal academy for the science of war; *The History of the life of King David*, vol. ii.

(g) 2 Kings xii. 20.

(h) 2 Chron. xxxii. 5.

(i) 1 Kings ix. 15.

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

house of the Lord, and the walls of Jerusalem, we cannot but suppose, that it was a building of the same public nature; and we since find further, that (k) the servants of King Joash arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew him in the house of Millo, very probably when he was come thither to debate, and consult with his princes, and other chief men, the thing seems to be incontestable, that this house of Millo was erected for a public senate-house, though there is some reason to imagine, that it was employed likewise for other purposes.

In the reign of Hezekiah, when Sennacherib came against Jerusalem with a purpose to besiege it, the king took council with his princes, and, among other things that were thought proper for his defence, it is said, *(l) that he built up all the wall that was fallen, and repaired Millo, and made darts and shields in abundance.* From whence we may infer, that this Millo was a place of great consequence to the strength of Jerusalem, and was very probably made to serve two purposes, *i. e.* to be both a parliament-house and an arsenal.

The palace which David built for himself (to which was adjoined that which his son built for the king of Egypt's daughter) must needs have been a very magnificent structure, since he had both his *(m)* workmen and materials sent him from † Tyre, which, at that time, surpassed all other nations in the art of building: But of this we can give no other account, than that it stood westward from the temple, and consisted of a large square-court, defended by flankers, from one of which was the descent by stairs into the gardens, which, in all probability, were watered by the fountain of Siloam.

This fountain of Siloam rises just under the walls of Jerusalem, on the east-side thereof, between the city and the brook Kidron; and, in all probability, was the same with the fountain Enrogel, or the *Fuller's fountain*, whereof we find mention *(n)* in Joshua, and in the books of Samuel, and the Kings. Some travellers will have it, that

(k) 2 Kings xii. 20.

(l) 2 Chron. xxxii. 5.

(m) 1 Chron. xiv. 1.

† This must be understood of the Old Tyre, which was situate upon the continent, and where the temple of Hercules stood, of whose antiquity Herodotus talks so much; and not of the New Tyre, which stood upon a neighbouring island, but was not built until the days of Solomon; *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

(n) Josh. xv. 7. 2 Sam. xvii. 17. and 1 Kings i. 9.

Its fountains.

the

the water of this fountain is brackish, and has not a good taste; but the prophet Isaiah, when he utters the complaint of God against the Jews, (*o*) *forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah, which go softly, &c.* seems to denote the contrary. However this be, St. Jerom himself affirms, that the waters of this fountain made the valley through which they ran (as watering the gardens and plantations that were there) very pleasant and delightful.

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

The fountain of Gihon, which springs very probably from an adjacent hill of the same name, was on the west side of Jerusalem; and as King Hezekiah (*p*) ordered the upper channel of this fountain to be conveyed into Jerusalem, that, when the city was besieged, the enemy might not have the benefit of its waters; so we need not doubt, but (*q*) that that other spring of Siloam was, in like manner, conveyed into the city, and that, for the convenience of its inhabitants, they were both, in several places, distributed (*r*) into pools; though some make that of Siloam to be without the walls.

The brook Kidron runs in the valley of Jehoshaphat, on the east of Jerusalem, between the city and the mount of Olives. It has usually no great quantity of water in it, and is frequently quite dry; but, upon any sudden rains, it swells exceedingly, and runs with great impetuosity. It was indeed of singular service to the ancient city, as it received its common sewers, and upon every such violent flood, emptied them into the Dead Sea.

The mount of Olives, which doubtless had its name from the great quantity of olive-trees that grew there, was situated to the east of Jerusalem, and parted from the city only by the valley of Jehoshaphat, and the brook Kidron; for which reason it is said to be a Sabbath-day's journey, *i. e.* about a mile from it. It was on this mountain that Solomon built temples to the gods of the Ammonites, and of the Moabites, in complaisance to his wives, who were natives of these nations; and for this reason it is likewise called in Scripture, (*s*) the *mount of corruption*, because such as follow vain idols are frequently said in Scripture to corrupt themselves. (*t*) Some indeed have imagined, that this mount of corruption was a distinct place; but the matter of fact is, that Mount Olivet had three summits, or was

Its moun-
tains.

(*o*) Isaiah viii. 6. (*p*) 2 Chron. xxxii. 30. (*q*) Lamy's Introduction, lib. i. c. 3. (*r*) John ix. 7. (*s*) 2 Kings xxiii. 13. (*t*) Wells's Geography of the Old Testament.

A. M. 2981, &c. Ant. Christ. 1023, &c. from 2 Sam. xix. to 1 Kings viii. made up of three several mountains, ranged one after another, from north to south. The middle summit was that from which our Lord ascended; towards the south was that whereon Solomon (*u*) set up his abominations; and towards the north was the highest of all, (*x*) which was commonly called Galilee.

Mount Calvary, which, in all appearance, had its name * from the similitude it bore to the figure of a scull, or man's head, was to the west of the ancient Jerusalem, just without the gates: And as our Saviour suffered there, we may presume it was the common place where criminals of all kinds were generally executed.

Its valleys. The valley of Hinnon, or the sons of Hinnon, lay to the south of the city, and was remarkable for the cruel and barbarous worship of Moloch, where parents made their children pass through the fire, or be burnt in the fire, by way of sacrifice to that idol; and where it was usual to have musical instruments (from whence it obtained likewise the name of *Tophet*, the Hebrew word *Toph* signifying the same as *tympanum* in Latin, and *timbrel* in English) to drown the lamentable shrieks of the children thus sacrificed. In this place there was afterwards kept a perpetual fire to consume the dead carcases and excrements, which were brought from Jerusalem; and therefore our Saviour alluding to this, calls hell by the name of *Ge-henna*, or *the valley of Hinnon*.

The valley of Jehoshaphat, which is likewise called *the valley of Kidron*, because of the above-mentioned brook which runs through it, lies on the east of Jerusalem, between the city and the mount of Olives. Our Saviour

(*u*) 2 Kings xxiii. 13. (*x*) Vide Reland's Palæst.

* Some formerly have been of opinion, that this mount was called *Calvary*, because the head of the first man in the world was buried there, and that our Saviour was crucified in the same place; and that his blood, running down upon the body of this person, might restore him to life, and procure him the favour of a resurrection. To support this tradition they tell us, that Noah, having preserved Adam's body in the ark, distributed the several parts of it to his children, and, as a particular favour, gave the skull or head to Shem, who was to be the parent of that holy stock, from whom the Messiah was to come; and that Shem, with a spirit of foresight, buried the skull in *Calvary*, where he knew the Messiah would be crucified. But neither the ancient fathers, nor any modern authours that mention this tradition, were ever persuaded of its truth; and (without any disrespect to them) we may look upon all this as mere fiction; *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Calvary*.

indeed

indeed ascended from this mount; but the notion is very extravagant, that when he returns again he will judge the world in this valley, merely because the prophet Joel hath said, (y) *I will gather all nations, and will bring them into the valley of Jehosaphat, and will plead with them for my people*; for what is there called *the valley of Jehosaphat*, is not a proper, but an appellative name, and denotes no more than the judgment of God.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

There is another valley that the Scripture makes early mention of, and that is (z) *the valley of Shaveh*, which is likewise called *the king's dale*, where Melchisedeck met Abraham in his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer. According to Josephus, it was, in his time, but about two furlongs distant from Jerusalem, and, for this reason, perhaps, it has been thought by some to be no other than the valley of Jehosaphat; though others make it different, yet so, as to come up near to the said valley, and to lie on the south-east part of the city, not far from the king's gardens. (a) Why it obtained the name of the *king's dale*, whether it was from its near situation to the king's palace and gardens, or from its being the place where the kings were wont to exercise themselves, or at least to entertain themselves with seeing others perform their exercises of running, riding, and the like, is not agreed, and very likely will never be determined.

There were several gates belonging to the ancient Jerusalem, that are mentioned in Scripture; but it is no easy matter to discover where their particular situation was. There is reason to believe likewise, that their names have been varied, or that one and the same gate has gone under different appellations; and as there were several circuits of walls in the city, which had their respective gates, it is more than probable, that some of these gates did not lead out of the city into the country. The gate of the valley, which doubtless had its name from leading into some valley, (and, * as travellers will have it, to the valley of Jehosaphat) was situate on the east-side of the city.

The

(y) Joel iii. 2. (z) Gen. xiv. 17, 18. (a) Wells's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. iii.

* Our countryman, Mr Sandys, is of opinion, that the gate of the valley was formerly the same with what is now called *St. Stephen's gate*, not far from the golden gate, or great gate, which leads into that which was formerly the court of the temple.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

The dung-gate, which seems to have taken its name from the dung and filth of the beasts that were sacrificed at the temple, being carried out of it, was probably the same with what is now so called, and stands on the east-side of the city likewise.

The water-gate, which took its name from its use, because through it was the water brought to serve the city and the temple, was (*b*) on the same side; and so was

The gate of the fountain, (so called from its nearness to the fountain of Siloam), only inclining a little towards the south.

The gate of Ephraim, which opened to the main road, leading to the tribe of Ephraim, and from it derived its name, stood on the north-side of the city, because on that side was that tribe seated; (*c*) tho' others had rather place it on the west.

The horse-gate, sheep-gate, and fish-gate, are supposed by some to have had their denominations from the several markets of these creatures, that were kept there. The horse and sheep gates were both on the east-side, not far from the palace and the temple; and the fish-gate was on the north, though some, who think it had its name from the fish that were brought from the Mediterranean sea, had rather place it on the west-side.

Lastly, the high-gate, or the gate of Benjamin, so called from its situation towards the land or tribe of Benjamin, is supposed by some to have been the principal gate of the royal palace; but from what we read, (*d*) concerning Jeremiah's being grossly abused near this gate, it appears to have been situated by the house of the Lord.

Its royal
sepulchres:

Thus we have passed through most of the gates of this ancient city; and on the north-side of it (without the walls now, but then probably within them) we meet with some subterraneous chambers, that are wonderfully magni-

temple. He likewise supposes, that this gate of St. Stephen's was formerly called the *sheep-gate*; but into this opinion perhaps he might be led by the nearness of St. Stephen's gate to the Pool of Bethesda, where the sacrifices were washed before they were brought to the priest to be offered; and therefore, since the valley-gate, and the sheep-gates are distinctly mentioned by Nehemiah, we cannot but think, that they must have been different gates; *Wells's Geography of the Old Test.* vol. iii.

(*b*) Nehem. iii. 26. (*c*) Explication du nouveau plan de l'ancienne Jerusalem, par M. Calmet. (*d*) Jer. xx. 2.

ficient

ficent, and at present called the *sepulchres of the kings*, (e) A. M. 2981, &c. Ant. Christ. 1023, &c. from 2 Sam. xix. to 1 Kings viii. of which some late travellers give us a description to this effect:—“When you come to the place, you pass through an entry hewed out of a rock, which admits you into an open court about twenty-six feet square, all cut out of the rock, which is of solid marble, and serves instead of walls. On the left hand of this court is a portico nine paces long, and four broad, (with a kind of architrave running round its front), cut out of the same rock, as are likewise the pillars that support it. At the end of this portico there is a passage into the sepulchres, which (when you have crept through it with some difficulty) lets you into a large chamber of above four and twenty feet square. Its sides and cieling are so exactly square, and its angles so just, that no architect, with levels and plummets, could build a room more regular. From this room you pass into six more, one within another, and all of the same fabric with the first, except that the two innermost are deeper than the rest, and have a descent of about six or seven steps into them. In every one of these rooms (except the first) were coffins of stone, placed in niches, along the sides of the room, and amount in all to about fifty.”

This perhaps is the only real work that now remains of the Old Jerusalem; and what makes it justly looked upon as a wonder, is, that the cieling, the doors, as well as all the rest, their hinges, their posts, their frames, &c. are all cut out of the same continued rock. It may therefore be worth our inquiring a little in what manner these structures were employed, and who possibly might be the persons that were repositied in them.

That these subterraneous structures were not the sepulchres of the kings of Judah, the generality of those that have inspected them are agreed, because the Scripture tells us, that David and Solomon, and most of their successors, were (f) buried in the city of David; and yet these grotts lie without the gate of Damascus (as it is now called) at a considerable distance from the city of David: But how far this city of David did formerly extend, or where we shall

And who were buried in them.

(e) *Vid.* Thevenot's Voyages, part i. lib. ii. c. 4; and Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem. (f) 1 Kings ii. 10. and xi. 43.

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

find any other signs of * the places, where David, and the other kings his successors were buried, we have no hints given us. The Reverend Mr. Maundrell, from this passage in Scripture, (*g*) *And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David*, is of opinion, that this was the place where Hezekiah, and the sons immediately born to David, that were not repositied in the royal sepulchres, were buried: But it is much more probable (and what both the Syriac and Arabic versions seem to confirm) that by *the sons of David* here, we are not to understand his immediate sons, properly so called, but the kings rather that succeeded him. This is a form of speech frequently made use of by the sacred writers: And therefore the sense of *Hezekiah's being buried in the sepulchres of the sons of David*, must be, that he was buried in the sepulchres of the kings descended from David.

The more probable opinion, therefore, is that of Le Bruyn, who supposes, that these grots were the sepulchres of Manasseh, his son Amon, and his grandson Josiah, kings of Judah. Of Manasseh the Scripture tells us expressly, that (*h*) *he was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza*; and of Amon it is said, *that he was buried in the garden of Uzza*; which garden Manasseh might very probably purchase, and being taken with the pleasantness of it, might there build him an house,

* Benjamin of Tudela, who wrote about the year 1173, relates, that not above fifteen years before, a wall belonging to mount Sion, fell down. and the priests set twenty men to work upon it. Two of these workmen being one day left alone, took up a stone, which opened a passage into a subterraneous place, into which they entered. There they found a palace, supported by marble pillars, and crufted over with gold and silver. At the entrance was a table, and upon this table a golden crown and sceptre. This (say the Jews), was David's monument, and opposite to it was Solomon's, adorned in the like manner. As they were attempting to penetrate farther, they were overfet by a whirlwind, and remained senseless till the evening, when they heard a voice, bidding them arise, and be gone. Benjamin assures us, that he had this story from the mouth of one Abraham, a Pharisee, who, as he said, had been consulted about this event by the patriarch of Jerusalem, and declared that this was David's monument. But the whole of this account has so much the air of a fable, that it is needless to confute it; *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *David*.

(*g*) 2 Chron. xxxii. 33. (*h*) 2 Kings xxi. 18, 26.

which

which is here called *his own house*, in contradistinction to the royal palace, which was built and inhabited by his ancestors on mount Sion. Of Josiah indeed the sacred history does not say expressly, that he was buried here; all that it tells us is, that he (i) *was buried in the sepulchres of his fathers*; but whether in the city of David, or in the garden of Uzza, it makes no mention: And therefore, since both his father and grandfather were buried in this garden, there is reason to think, that Josiah was here buried likewise; especially considering, that in one of these subterraneous rooms (as Le Bruyn tells us) which seemed to be more lofty than the rest, there were three coffins curiously adorned with carved works, which he took to be the coffins of these three kings.

A. M.
2981, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1023, etc.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

But of all the buildings that ancient Jerusalem had to boast of, the temple which David designed, and Solomon perfected, was the most magnificent. We are not however to imagine, that this temple was built like one of our churches; for it did not consist of one single edifice, but † of several courts and buildings, which took up a great deal of ground. The place whereon it was erected, was the top of mount Moriah, and the building all together made an exact square of eight hundred cubits, or one thousand four hundred and sixty feet long on each side, exactly fronting the east, west, north, and south.

Its temple.

(k) To make this building more firm and secure, it was found necessary to begin the foundation at the bottom of the mount; so that the sides were three hundred and thirty-three cubits, or about six hundred and eight feet high, before they were raised to the level of the temple; and this afforded a most noble prospect towards the chief part

(i) 2 Chron. xxxv. 24.

† These several parts of the temple the Greeks are very careful to distinguish by different names. What was properly the temple, they called *ὁ ναὸς*; and the courts, and other parts of the temple, *τὰ ἱερόα*. Thus when Zacharius is said to have gone into the temple to burn incense, Luke i. 9. (which was done in the *sanctum*) the word is *ναὸς*; but when it is said, that Anna, the prophetess departed not from the temple, Luke ii. 37. (i. e. lived in that part of the court of the Israelites which was appropriated to religious women) the Greek word is *ἱερόα*. And this observation holds good all through the New Testament; Lamy, *De tabern. lib. v. c. 5.*

(k) Bedford's Chronology, lib. iv. c. 5.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Chriſt.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

of the city which lay weſtward. It is impoſſible to compute the labour of laying this foundation, becauſe it is impoſſible to tell how much of the mountain muſt in ſome places be removed, and in others filled up, to bring it to an exact ſquare for ſo great an height: But when we conſider, that there were 180,000 workmen, for ſeven years and an half, conſtantly employed, we cannot but admire what buſineſs could be found for ſo many hands to do; and yet, when we reflect on the vaſtneſs of this fabric, it would make one no leſs wonder, how in ſo ſhort a time it could poſſibly be completed. “ For the foundation (as Joſephus tells “ us) was laid prodigiouſly deep, and the ſtones were not “ only of the largeſt ſize, but hard and firm enough to “ endure all weathers, and be proof againſt the worm. “ Beſides this, they were ſo mortiſed into one another, “ and ſo wedged into the rock, that the ſtrength and cu- “ rioſity of the baſis was not leſs admirable than the in- “ tended ſuperſtructure, and the one was every way an- “ ſwerable to the other.”

The ground-plot upon which the temple was built, was a ſquare of ſix hundred cubits every way. It was en- compaſſed with a wall of ſix cubits high, and the ſame in breadth, and contained ſeveral buildings for different uſes, ſurrounded with cloyſters ſupported by marble pillars. Within this ſpace was the *court of the Gentiles*, fifty cu- bits wide, and adorned, in like manner, with cloyſters and pillars. To ſeparate this court from *the court of the Iſraelites*, there was a wall of five hundred cubits ſquare. The court of the Iſraelites was an hundred cubits. It was paved with marble of different colours, and had four gates, to every quarter one, and each riſing with an aſcent of ſeven ſteps. To ſeparate this court from *the court of the prieſts*, there was a wall of two hundred cubits, ſquare; and the prieſts court was an hundred cubits encompaſſed with cloyſters, and apartments, where the prieſts, that attended the ſervice of the temple, were uſed to live. This court had but three gates, to the eaſt, to the north, and to the ſouth, and were approached by an aſcent of eight ſteps. Theſe courts were all open, and without any covering. But in caſe of rain, or other bad weather, the people could retire under the cloyſters, that were ſupported with rows of pillars, and went round every court. In the Iſraelites court, over-againſt the gate of the prieſts court, was erected a throne for the king, (which was a magnificent alcove) where he ſeated himſelf

when

when he came to the temple. In the priests court was the altar of burnt-offerings, a great deal larger than that of the tabernacle, having ten brazen lavers, whereas the tabernacle had but one, and a sea of brass (which the tabernacle had not) supported by twelve oxen.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

On the west-side of the altar of burnt offerings, there was an ascent of twelve steps to what we may properly call the Temple; and this consisted of three parts, the porch, the sanctuary, and the holy of holies. The porch was about twelve cubits long, and twenty broad, at the entrance of which stood the two famous pillars Jachan and Boaz, whose names import, that *God alone was the support of the temple*; and its gate was fourteen cubits wide. The sanctuary, or nave of the temple, was forty cubits long, and twenty broad, wherein were the altar of incense, and the table of shew-bread; but because the temple was larger, and wanted more light than the tabernacle, instead of one, it had ten golden candlesticks. The holy of holies was a square of twenty cubits, wherein was placed the ark of the covenant, containing the two tables of stone, wherein God had engraven his ten commandments; but instead of two cherubims (as were in the tabernacle) in the temple there were four.

Round about the temple, and against the walls thereof, (as Josephus tells us), were built thirty cells, or little houses, which served in the way of so many buttresses, and were, at the same time, no small ornament to it; for there were stories of these cells one above another, whereof the second was narrower than the first, and the third than the second, so that their roofs and balastrades being within each other, made three different terrasses (as it were) † upon which one might walk round the temple. Within, these

† The temple itself, strictly so called, had two stories, the upper of which was raised quite above these little houses, and their roofs; for their roofs reached no higher than the top of the first story. The second story, which had no building adjoining to its side, made a large room over the sanctuary, and the holy of holies, of equal dimensions with them: and it is no improbable opinion, that this was the upper chamber, in which the Holy Ghost was pleased to descend upon the apostles in a visible manner. This upper room was appropriated to the pious laity, as a place for them to come and pay their devotions in; and therefore it seems very likely, that the Apostles were here with other devout persons, while the temple was full of

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix to
1 Kings viii.

these little houses were cieled with cedar, their walls were wainscoted with the same, and embellished with carving and fretwork, overlaid with gold, which, with their dazzling splendour, made every thing about them look glorious.

Upon the whole then, we may observe, (*l*) that the glory of this temple did not consist in the bulk or largeness of it, (for in itself it was but a small pile of building, no more than an hundred and fifty feet in length, and an hundred and five in breadth, taking the whole of it together from out to out, and is exceeded by many of our parish churches), but its chief grandeur and excellency lay in its out-buildings and ornaments, in its workmanship, which was every where very curious, and its overlayings, which were vast and prodigious; for the overlaying of the holy of holies only (which was a room but thirty feet square, and twenty high) amounted to six hundred talents of gold, which comes to four millions three hundred and twenty thousand pounds of our Sterling money.

To conclude this dissertation then, (*m*) in the words of the Jewish historian, "The whole frame, in fine," says he, "was raised upon stones, polished to the highest degree of perfection, and so artificially put together, that there was no joint to be discerned, no sign of any working tools being upon them, but the whole looked liker the work of providence and nature, than the product of art and human invention. And as for the inside, whatever carving, gilding, embroidery, rich silks, and fine linen could do, of these there was the greatest profusion. The very floor of the temple was overlaid with beaten gold, the doors were large, and proportioned to the height of the walls, twenty cubits broad, and still gold upon gold."

Jews of all nations, who were come to celebrate the feast of the Pentecost, and that thereupon they below, hearing the noise, which was occasioned by the shaking of the place, ran up to see the cause of it, and, to their great surprise, found the apostles distinguished from the other Jews about them, both by the cloven tongues which sat upon each of them, and by the several different languages that they spake; *Lamy's Introduction, lib. i. c. 4.*

(*l*) Prideaux's Connection, part i. lib. 3.
Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2.

(*m*) Jewish

In a word, it was gold all over, and * nothing was wanting, either within or without, that might contribute to the glory and magnificence of the work.

A. M.
2981, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1023, &c.
from 2 Sam.
xix. to
1 Kings viii.

* It is not to be doubted, but that Solomon made all the utensils and ornaments of the temple proportionable, both in number and richness, to that of the edifice; and yet Josephus seems to have carried his account beyond all credibility, when he tells us, that there were 10,000 tables, besides those of the shew-bread; 10,000 candlesticks, besides those in the holy place; 80,000 cups for drink-offerings; 100,000 basons of gold, and double that number of silver: When he tells us that Solomon caused to be made 1000 ornaments for the sole use of the high priest; 10,000 linen robes and girdles, for that of the common priests; and 200,000 more for the Levites and musicians: When he tells of 200,000 trumpets, made according to Solomon's direction, with 200,000 more, made in the fashion that Moses had appointed, and 400,000 musical instruments of a mixed metal, between gold and silver, called by the ancients *electrum*. Concerning all which, we can only say, that the text is either silent, or contradicts this prodigious account; *Universal History*, lib. i. c. 7.



THE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

BOOK VI.

Containing an Account of Things, from the Building of Solomon's Temple, to the Babylonish Captivity. In all about 400 Years.

CHAPTER I.

From the finishing of the Temple, to the Reign of Jehosaphat.

THE HISTORY.

WHEN Solomon had finished the temple, which A. M. 3008, etc. was in the eleventh year of his reign, and in Ant. Chris. 1003, etc. the eighth month of that year, even when from all the solemn feasts were over, he thought it advisable to defer the dedication of it until the next year, 1 Kings viii. to the end. of 2 Chron. (which was a year of jubilee), and determined to have it done some days before the * feast of tabernacles. To this Solomon's dedication of the temple.

* This feast was appointed in commemoration of the children of Israel's dwelling in booths, whilst they were in the wilderness, and of the tabernacle, which at that time was built, where God promised to meet them, to dwell among them, and
to

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end.
of 2 Chron.

this purpose, he sent all the elders of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the heads of the families, notice to repair to Jerusalem at the time appointed ; when accordingly, all being met together, the priests and Levites carried into the temple, first, all the presents that David had made to it ; then set up, in their several places, the vessels and ornaments appointed for the service of the altar, and the sanctuary ; and lastly, brought the ark of the covenant, together with the tabernacle of the congregation,

to sanctify the place with his glory ; and might therefore be well reckoned a proper season for the dedication of the temple, which was to succeed in the tabernacle's place ; *Bedford's Scripture-chronology, lib. vi. c. 2.*

|| The sacred history tells us, that *in this ark there was nothing, save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, 1 Kings viii. 9.* and yet the author to the Hebrews affirms, *that in this ark was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, as well as the tables of the covenant, Heb. ix. 4.* Now, to reconcile this, some imagine, that before the ark had any fixed and settled place, (which is the time the apostle refers to), all these things were included in it, though it was chiefly intended for nothing but the tables of the covenant ; but that, when it was placed in the temple, nothing was left in it but these two tables ; all the other things were deposited in the treasury of the temple, where the book of the law (as we read 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14.) was found in the days of King Josias. Others however pretend, that in the time of the apostle, *i. e.* towards the end of the Jewish commonwealth, Aaron's rod, and the pot of manna were really kept in the ark, though, in the days of Solomon, they were not. But this answer would be more solid and satisfactory, if we knew for certain, that, in the time of the apostle, the ark of the covenant was really in the sanctuary of the temple, which Herod build ; whereas Josephus (*De bello Jud. lib. vi. c. 6.*) tells us expressly, that, when the Romans destroyed the temple, there was nothing found in the *Holy of Holies* ; *Calmet's Commentary.*

† But the question is, what tabernacle, whether that which Moses made, and was then at Gibeon, 2 Chron. i. 3. or that which was made by David, and was then at Jerusalem ? To end this dispute, some have imagined, that both these tabernacles were at this time carried into the temple, and laid up there, that all danger of superstition and idolatry might thereby be avoided, and that no worship might be performed any where, but only at the house which was dedicated to God's service : But it is observed by others, that the convenience

tion, into its new habitation with great solemnity; the king and elders of the people walking before, while others of the priests offered an † infinite number of sacrifices, in all the places through which the ark passed.

A. M.
1001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

convenience which David made for the reception of the ark, was never called the *tabernacle of the covenant*; it was no more than a plain tent, set up in some large room of the royal palace, until a more proper receptacle could be provided for it: but the tabernacle that was at Gibeon, was the same that sojourned so long in the wilderness. The tent was the same, the curtains the same, and the altar the same, that was made by Moses; or, at least, if there was any alteration in it; (as things of this nature could hardly subsist so very long without some repair), the reparation was always made according to the original model, and with as little deviation as possible. It is not to be doubted, then, but that the Mosaic tabernacle is the tabernacle here intended, which, for the prevention of schism, and to make the temple the centre of devotion, was now taken down, and repositied in the treasury, or storehouse, where it continued until the time that Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans, when Jeremiah, as Josephus informs us, (*Jewish Antiq lib. viii. c. 2.*) was admonished by God, to take it and the ark, and the altar of incense, and hide them in some secret places, (from whence, it is doubted whether they have ever yet been removed), for fear of profanation; *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

† The number of sacrifices, which, upon this occasion, are said to be offered, was *two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep*, 1 Kings viii. 63.; but we must not suppose, that these were offered all on one day, much less on one altar. The continuance of this meeting was for fourteen days, seven in the feast of tabernacles, and seven in that of the dedication; and because the brazen altar, before the door of the temple, was not sufficient to receive all these sacrifices, Solomon, by a special licence from God, ordered other altars to be erected in the court of the priests, and, perhaps in other places, which were to serve only during this present solemnity, when such a vast number of sacrifices were to be offered: For at other times, no other altar was allowed but this brazen one, which Moses had made. It is no bad observation however of Josephus, (*lib. viii. c. 2.*) that, during the oblation of so many sacrifices, the Levites took care to “ perfume the air with the fragrancy of incense, and sweet odours, to such a degree, that the people were “ sensible of it at a distance;” otherwise the burning of so many beasts at one time, must have occasioned an offensive smell; *Patrick's Commentary.*

When

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end.
of 2 Chron.

When the ark was placed in the sanctuary, and the priests and Levites, in their turns, were celebrating the praises of God, the temple was filled with a * miraculous cloud, insomuch that the priests could not continue to officiate. This Solomon observing, took occasion from thence to infer, that the Lord had taken possession of the place ; and having for some time fallen prostrate with his face to the ground, he raised himself up, and turning towards the sanctuary, * addressed his prayer to God, and “ beseeched
“ him

* When Moses had finished the tabernacle, according to the pattern which God had shewed him, and set it all up, it is said, that *a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle; so that Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, Exod. xl 34, 35.* And therefore, when the temple was finished, and the ark brought into the sanctuary, God gave the like indication of his presence, and residence there. Hereby he testified his acceptance of the building, and furnishing of the temple, as a service done to his name ; and hereby he declared, that as the glory of the ark (that sacred symbol of his presence) had been long eclipsed by its frequent removes, and mean habitations ; so now his pleasure was, that it should be looked upon with the same esteem and veneration as when Moses conducted it into the tabernacle. For this cloud, we must know, was not a heavy, thick, opaque body, such as is ingendered in the air, and arises from vapours and exhalations, but a cloud, that was dark and luminous at the same time, whose darkness was awful and majestic, and whose internal part was bright and refulgent, darting its rays upon occasion, and exhibiting its light through its obscurity: So that, according to its different phasis, or position, it became to the Israelites a pillar of a cloud by day, to screen them from the heat, and at night a pillar of fire, to give them light, Exod. xiii. 21. Whatever it was that constituted this strange appearance, it is certain this mixture of light and darkness was looked upon as a symbol of the divine presence ; for so the Scripture has informed us, that he who dwelleth in light that is inaccessible, *made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him, with dark water, and thick clouds to cover him, Psal. xviii. 11. ; Calmet's Commentary.*

* The prayer which Josephus puts into Solomon's mouth upon this occasion, is to this effect : — “ O Lord, thou that inhabitest eternity, and hast raised out of nothing the mighty fabric of this universe, the heavens, the air, the earth, and the sea ; thou
“ that

“ him graciously to accept of the house which he had
 “ built for his sake ; to bless and sanctify it ; and to hear ^{A. M. 3001, &c. Ant. Christ. 1003, &c.}
 “ the prayers of all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who, upon
 “ any occasion, either of public or private calamity, might ^{from 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.}
 “ direct their supplications to him † from that holy place.
 “ He beseeched him likewise to fulfil the promise which he
 “ had been pleased to make to his father David, in favour
 “ of his family, and the kings his successors ;” and having

“ that fillest the whole, and every thing that is in it, and art thy-
 “ self unbounded and incomprehensible ; look down graciously
 “ upon thy servants, that have presumed to erect a temple here
 “ to the honour of thy great name Hear our prayers, and re-
 “ ceive our sacrifices. Thou art every where, vouchsafe also to
 “ be with us. Thou that seest and hearest all things, look down
 “ from thy throne in heaven, and give ear to our supplications
 “ in this place. Thou that never failest to assist those that call
 “ upon thee day and night, and love and serve thee as they
 “ ought to do, have mercy upon us ” There is another prayer
 in the same historian, addressed to God on this same occasion,
 wherein Solomon blesses him for the exaltation of his family,
 and implores the continuance of his goodness and peculiar pre-
 sence in the temple, well worth the reader’s perusal, though
 too long to be inserted here.

† It is the same thing, no doubt, to God, wherever we pray,
 so long as we pray with a pious mind and a devout heart, and
 make the subject of our prayers such good things as he has per-
 mitted us to ask ; but it was not consistent with the preservation
 of the Jewish state and religion, that he should be publicly wor-
 shipped in every place. For since the Jews were on every side
 surrounded with idolaters, led away with divers superstitions,
 but ignorant all of the true God, it was highly necessary, that
 in all divine matters, there should be a strict union between them
 all both in heart and voice, and consequently, that they should
 all meet together in one place to worship God, lest they should
 run into parties, and fall into idolatry, as it happened when the
 kingdom became divided into two. And therefore, though So-
 lomon knew very well, that in every place God was ready to
 hear the prayers of every devout supplicant, yet, for the pre-
 servation of peace and unity, he was minded to give the peo-
 ple a notion, that God would be found more exorable to the
 prayers which were offered in the temple of Jerusalem, and there-
 by excite them to a frequentation of that, rather than any o-
 ther place ; *Le Clerc’s Commentary* in locum.

A. M. thus finished his prayer, he turned to the people, and after he had blessed them, gave them a strict charge to be sincere in their duty towards God, to walk in his statutes, and observe his laws.

3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end.
of 2 Chron.

While Solomon was thus addressing his prayers to God, and his exhortations to the people, a victim was laid upon the altar, and God, to testify his acceptance of what was doing, sent immediately a fire from heaven, which consumed it, and all the other sacrifices that were about it; which, when the people, who were witnesses of the miracle, perceived, they fell upon their faces, and worshipped the God of Israel: And it was, very probably, on the † night following, that he appeared to Solomon again in a dream, and * signified to him, “ That he had heard his
“ prayer ;

† It is thus that we have placed the time of God’s second appearance to Solomon; but some are of opinion, that it did not happen till two and twenty years after God’s first appearance, and after that Solomon had accomplished all his buildings; to which the connection of the discourse seems to give some countenance; and it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, and the king’s house, and all that he was pleased to do, that the Lord appeared to him a second time, 1 Kings ix. 1, 2. It seems a little strange however, that God should delay answering this prince’s prayer for thirteen years together, and then, when he appeared to him, tell him, *I have heard thy prayer, and the supplication that thou hast made before me, and I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built*, ver. 3. And therefore, to solve this difficulty, it is reasonable to think, that the division of this 9th chapter is wrong; that the first verse of it should be annexed to the conclusion of the preceding chapter, and so terminate the account of what Solomon had done; and that the next chapter should begin with the second verse, where the historian enters upon a new subject, viz. the answer that God returned to Solomon’s prayer, which he continues to the 10th verse, and presents us with it all at once, that he might not break the thread of his narration; *Calmet’s Commentary* on 1 Kings ix. 2.

* Josephus has made a very handsome comment upon the answer which God made Solomon in his dream. The voice told him farther, says he, “ That in case of such an apostacy, (as he had before mentioned), his new-erected fabric should, by divine permission, come to be sacked, and burnt by the hands of barbarians, and “ Jerusalem itself laid in rubbish and ashes by a merciless enemy;
“ inasmuch

“ prayer ; did accept of the temple which he had built for
 “ him ; and would not fail to listen to the petitions that
 “ proceeded from thence ; that if he persevered in his o-
 “ bedience to him, as his father David had done, he would
 “ establish his throne, and perpetuate a race of successors
 “ in his family ; but that, if either he, or his children,
 “ prevaricated in this matter, he would cut them off, o-
 “ verturn his kingdom, and destroy the temple.”

A. M.
 3001, &c.
 Ant. Christ.
 1003, &c.
 from
 to the end
 of 2 Chron.
 1 Kings viii.

The feast of the dedication, in conjunction with that of
 tabernacles, lasted for fourteen days ; and when all things
 were thus performed with the greatest order and solemnity,
 on the morrow the king dismissed the people, who re-
 turned to their respective homes with glad and joyful hearts.

Solomon (it must be observed) had a singular taste
 for building ; therefore, after he had finished and consecrated
 the temple, he undertook a palace for himself, * which
 had

His public
 buildings,
 great reve-
 nues, and
 magnificent
 way of li-
 ving.

“ inasmuch that people should stand amazed at the very report
 “ of so incredible a misery and distress, and be wondering one
 “ to another, how it could come to pass, that a nation which
 “ was but yesterday the envy of mankind for riches, external
 “ glory, and renown, should now, all on a sudden, be sunk and
 “ lost to the last degree of wretchedness and contempt, and re-
 “ duced to this despicable state too by the same hand that raised
 “ them. To which questions their own guilty consciences shall
 “ make this answer : *We have forsaken our God ; we have abandoned*
 “ *the religion of our forefathers, and of our country, and all this is*
 “ *justly befallen us for our sins ;*” Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2.

* The description of this palace, which we may gather from Jo-
 sephus, Lamy, and others, that have treated of Solomon’s build-
 ings, is in this manner related : — “ Upon several rows of pal-
 “ lars, there was erected a spacious pile of building, in the na-
 “ ture of a common hall, for the hearing of causes. It was an
 “ hundred cubits in length, fifty in breadth, and in depth thirty,
 “ supported by fifteen square columns, covered with Co-
 “ rinthian work in cedar, and fortified with double doors, cu-
 “ riously wrought, that served both for the security and orna-
 “ ment of the place. In the middle of this hall was another e-
 “ difice of thirty cubits square, and under set with strong pillars,
 “ wherein was placed a throne of state, on which the king him-
 “ self used to sit personally in judgment. On the right hand of
 “ this court of justice stood the king’s own palace, and, on the
 “ left, that which he built for Pharaoh’s daughter, both fitted
 “ up with cedar, and built with huge stones of ten cubits square,

A. M. had all the magnificence that can be imagined, another for
3001, etc.
 Ant. Chris.
 1003, &c.
 from
 1 Kings viii.
 to the end
 of 2 Chron. his Egyptian queen, and a third, that was called † *the house of the forest of Lebanon*, where he chiefly chose to reside. These were the works of thirteen years: And as Hiram king of Tyre was very kind in supplying him with men, money, and materials, to carry on these, and many more stately structures, Solomon, to express his gratitude,

“ which were, partly plain, and partly overlaid with the most
 “ precious marble.—The rooms were hung with rich hang-
 “ ings, and beautified with images, and sculptures of all kinds,
 “ so exquisitely finished, that they seemed to be alive, and in
 “ motion. It would be an endless work, (says Josephus) to
 “ give a particular survey of this mighty mass of building: So
 “ many courts and other contrivances, such a variety of cham-
 “ bers and offices, great and little, long and large galleries,
 “ vast rooms of state, and others for feasting and entertainment,
 “ set out as richly as could be, with costly furniture, and gild-
 “ ings; besides, that all the services for the king’s table
 “ were of pure gold. In a word, the whole house was in a
 “ manner made up, from top to bottom, of white marble, ce-
 “ dar, gold, and silver, with precious stones, here and there in-
 “ termingled upon the walls and ceilings, after the manner of
 “ the adorning of the temple;” *Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2.*

† Some commentators are of opinion, that this house was the same with the palace which Solomon built in Jerusalem, and that it had its name from the tall pillars that supported it, which looked like the cedars in the forest of Lebanon; but the contrary is manifest, because the Scripture speaks of it as a distinct building, though perhaps it might not be far distant from the other, on some cool shady mountain, which made it resemble mount Lebanon. For it is an idle fancy to think that this house was really built on Lebanon, since we read of Solomon’s having his throne, 1 Kings vii. 7. and the golden shields, that he made, placed in it, 1 Kings x. 17. which he scarce would have removed to the very extremity of his kingdom: And therefore we may conclude (as indeed it appears from 1 Kings vii. 2.) that this house was near Jerusalem, and called by the name of the *Forest of Lebanon*, (just as many pleasant and delightful places in that country were called *Carmel*), because it was in a lofty place like Lebanon, and the trees which grew upon it made it very shady and cool, and consequently proper for Solomon to dwell there in summer, as he did in his palace in Jerusalem in winter; *Patrick’s and Calmet’s Commentaries on 1 Kings, vii. 2.*

or to clear off the debt which he had contracted with him, || offered him twenty cities in the land of Galilee, adjoining

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from

|| It is an express injunction which God gives the Israelites, that the land wherein the people had a right by divine lot, and himself a right, as being the sole proprietor thereof, was not to be sold or alienated for ever, Lev. xxv. 23. How then could Solomon, without violating this law, pretend to give Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee? Now to this some have replied, that Solomon did not give Hiram a property and perpetual right to those cities, but only assigned him the possession of them for a time, until the debt which he had contracted for the several supplies he had from him, while he was building the temple, was satisfied. Others think, that upon supposition that these cities were inhabited by Israelites, Solomon did not give Hiram (as indeed he could not) their particular possessions, but only his own royalties over them, (which he might justly do), and all the profits he received from them, which, according to the taxes then imposed, 1 Kings xii. 4. were not inconsiderable. But there is no reason for these far-fetched solutions, when the Scripture expressly tells us, that these cities were not in the territories of Israel, nor inhabited at that time by the Israelites, 2 Chron. viii. 2. They were indeed some of them conquered by the King of Egypt, who gave them to Solomon as a portion with his daughter, and others by Solomon himself, who, as Selden observes, (De jure nat. et gent. lib. vi. cap. 16.), had “a right to dispose of “those lands which he had conquered in voluntary war, without the consent of the senate:” And this may be one reason why he gave these, rather than other cities, because these were certainly in his own power to give, when others perhaps were not. A learned author, upon this subject, has given a quite different turn to the sense of the passage: For his opinion is, that Hiram did not return these cities because he thought them not good enough, but because he was unwilling to receive so large a remuneration for the few good offices he had done Solomon, and was minded rather, that his favours of this kind should be all gratuitous. He therefore makes the word *Cabul* (which is the name that Hiram gives to the country where these cities stood) a title of respect, and not of contempt; for he derives it from the Hebrew *Chebes*, which signifies a bond or chain, intimating, that these two neighbouring kings had mutually bound themselves in a bond of friendship, Solomon by giving, and Hiram by returning the cities now under consideration. This is very pretty: But it is carrying the point of generosity in the king of Tyre a little too high, in my opinion, considering his acceptance of, if not express stipulation for, such a quantity of corn and oil, in lieu

A. M. adjoining to his own country. But as these places † did
 3001, etc. not suit his convenience, he refused to accept of them;
 Ant. Christ. and therefore Solomon, having made him, no doubt, some
 1003, etc. other recompence more to his satisfaction, took and re-
 from paired these cities; and having built store-cities likewise in
 1 Kings viii. the country, he sent colonies of his own subjects to inhabit
 to the end of 2 Chron. them, that they might be a curb and restraint on the Sy-
 rians of Zobah, who had formerly been conquered by Da-
 vid, and, upon their revolt, but lately reduced by Solomon.

To conclude the account of Solomon's public build-
 ings. He built the walls of Jerusalem, and a senate-
 house in the same city, called Millo. He repaired, and
 fortified Hazor, Megiddo, the two Beth-Horons, Baalah,
 † Tadmor in the wilderness of Syria, and Gezer, which
 the

lieu of the timber which he sent Solomon, 1 Kings v. 10, 11.;
Patrick's and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*; and *Pool's Annotations*.

† The reason is, because the Tyrians being very commodi-
 ously situated for that purpose, were, in a manner, wholly ad-
 dicted to merchandize; and therefore would not remove from
 the sea-coasts, to live in a soil which was fat and deep, and con-
 sequently required a great deal of labour to cultivate it, which
 was a business that they were very little accustomed to; *Bed-
 ford's Scripture-chronology, lib. vi. c. 2.*

† Tadmor, which, by the Greeks is called *Palmyra*, is situat-
 ed in the wilderness of Syria, upon the borders of Arabia Deser-
 ta, inclining towards the Euphrates. Josephus places it two days
 journey from the Upper Syria, one day's journey from the Eu-
 phrates, and six days journey from Babylon: And the reason he
 gives why Solomon was inclined to build a city in this place, was,
 because in all the country round about, there was no such thing
 as a well, or fountain, but in this spot only, to be found. If
 we may guess by the ruins, which later travellers give us the de-
 scription of, this city was certainly one of the finest and most
 magnificent in the east, and it is somewhat surprising, that histo-
 ry should give us no account, either when, or by whom it was
 reduced to the sad condition wherein it lies at this day. But
 the true reason for his building this town in so desolate a place,
 was the commodiousness of its situation, to cut off all commerce
 between the Syrians and Mesopotamians, and to prevent their
 caballing and conspiring together against him, as they had done
 against his father David; *Le Clerc's Commentary*. If the read-
 er is desirous to know the present state of this ruined city, he
 may

the king of Egypt took from the Canaanites, and gave it in dower with his daughter. He fortified all the cities which he made his magazines for corn, wine, and oil, and those where his chariots and horses were kept. He subdued all the Hittites, and Hivites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, that any where remained in the land of Israel, and laid on them all the drudgery, and servile labour: But * as for his own subjects, he appointed them either to be surveyors of his works, or guards to his person, or commanders in the army, or traders and merchants, that so he might make his nation as famous, and as rich and flourishing, as it was possible to be effected by human policy.

A. M.
3061, &c.
Ant. Chris.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

But it was not only a multitude of hands, but a large supply of wealth likewise, that was necessary to carry on so many expensive buildings; and therefore Solomon took care to cultivate the trade to Ophir, which his father had begun, from Elam and † Ezion-Geber, two ports in the Red Sea, whither himself went in person to inspect the building of the ships, and to provide them with able and experienced seamen, which his good friend and ally Hiram was never backward to furnish him with. So that by this means his subjects, who soon attained to the art of navigation, were enabled to make several advantageous voyages;

may find it related in the Philosophical Transactions for October 1695, in a letter from Dr. Halifax to Dr. Bernard; or in Wells's Geography of the Old Testament, vol. iii. who has borrowed it from thence.

* History indeed takes notice of the same temper in Sesostris, king of Egypt, who, upon his return home from his several expeditions, took in his head to build Temples in all the cities of Egypt, but would suffer no Egyptian to do any servile work therein. All the work of this nature was performed by the captives that he brought with him from the wars; and therefore, to perpetuate the remembrance of his kindness to his subjects, as well as remove some possible odium from himself, upon every temple he ordered this inscription to be set up, *ἔδαις ἐργάσιος εἰς αὐτὰ μεμύθηται, No native was ever a labourer here*; Diodor. Biblioth. lib. i.

† Josephus will needs have it, that Ezion-Geber is the same with Berenice, which lies indeed upon the Red Sea, but then it is upon the western or African shore thereof; whereas the Scripture is positive, that it was a port of Idumæa, or Arabia Deserta, situate upon the Gulf of Elam, which is on the opposite shore. Elam, or Eloth, or Elath, (for it was called by all

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Chriſt.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

voyages; and, particularly in one fleet, * brought him home no leſs than || four hundred and twenty talents of gold, with many other commodities, and curioſities of great value. In ſhort, Solomon was one of the richeſt,

all theſe names) was ſituate upon the ſame, and might poſſibly have its name from thence. When David conquered Edom, or Idumæa, he made himſelf maſter of this port, 2 Sam. viii. 14. His ſon, we ſee, built ſhips here, and ſent them from hence to Ophir for gold, 2 Chron. viii. 17, 18. It continued in the poſſeſſion of the Iſraelites about an hundred and fifty years, till, in the time of Joram, the Edomites recovered it, 2 Kings viii. 20.; but it was again taken from them by Azariah, and by him left to his ſon, 2 Kings xiv. 22. His grandſon Ahaz however loſt it again to the King of Syria, 2 Kings xvi. 6. and the Syrians had it in their hands a long while, till, after many changes under the Ptolemies, and the Seleucidæ, it came at length into the poſſeſſion of the Romans. It was formerly a ſmall town, with fruitful fields about it, but now there is nothing left but a tower, which ſerves as an habitation for the governour, who is ſubject to the governour of Grand Cairo, and no ſigns of fruitfuineſs are to be ſeen in any parts adjoining to it; *Patrick's Commentary* and *Galmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Elam*.

* As great a king as Solomon was, we find he turned merchant; and yet the imperial laws forbid noblemen to exerciſe trade and commerce, as a thing below them; and much leſs then (as Bodinus *De republica*, lib. vi. c. 2.) does it become a king. But we muſt not meaſure antiquity by our own times: What might be then commendable may now have a different appearance: But the ſame author is very right in one conceſſion that he makes, *viz.* that though he would not have kings now to be merchants, yet, if he might have his choice, “ I had rather a prince ſhould be a merchant,” ſays he, “ than a tyrant, and that noblemen ſhould rather trade “ than oppreſs, and make a prey of their tenants;” *Patrick's Commentary*.

|| In 2 Chron. viii. 18. the number of talents brought home to Solomon, are ſaid to be four hundred and fifty: But this is a matter that is eaſily reſolved, if we will but ſuppoſe, that the charges of the voyage, to and fro, coſt thirty talents; or that Solomon gave Hiram's ſervants, for conducting his fleet, thirty talents; or that, in refining the whole maſs of gold, the waſte might be thirty talents: So that, though Solomon's fleet brought him home four hundred and fifty talents, yet by one or more of theſe deductions, there came clear to his coffers no more than four hundred and twenty; *Patrick's Commentary*.

and

and most magnificent princes, that was then on the face of the earth. In his time, silver was no more regarded than stones in the street : His annual revenues were six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, besides the tributes he received from the kings and nations that were in subjection to him ; the subsidies which his subjects the Israelites paid ; and the sums arising from the merchants for his customs. The bucklers of his guards were of gold ; the † ivory throne, whereon he sat, was overlaid with it ; and all the utensils of his palaces, and vessels of his table (which, † for magnificence, and sumptuousness of provision, exceeded all that was ever known before) were of the same metal. Presents of gold, of rich stuffs, of spices, of arms, of horses, and mules, were sent to him

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end.
of 2 Chron.

† We never read of ivory till about Solomon's days, who perhaps brought elephants out of India, or at least took care to have a great deal of ivory imported from thence ; for, in after ages, we read of ivory beds, and ivory palaces, &c. At this time, however, it was every whit as precious as gold : And therefore we must not suppose, that this throne of Solomon's was entirely overlaid with gold, (for then it might as well have been made of wood), but only in particular places, that so the mixture of gold and ivory, which gave a lustre to each other, might make the throne look more beautiful. The like to this, the text says, *there was not made in any kingdom*, 1 Kings x. 20. and perhaps it was so in those days ; but, in after ages, we read, that the throne of the Parthian kings was of gold, encompassed with four golden pillars, beset with precious stones ; and that the Persian Kings sat in judgment under a golden vine, (and other trees of gold), the bunches of whose grapes were made of several sorts of precious stones ; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The provisions of Solomon's table, for one day, were thirty measures (which according to the Hebrew word *Cor*, as Goodwin has computed it, are six gallons, above an hundred and sixty-eight bushels) “ of fine flour, and sixty of meal, (or coarser flour, for “ inferior servants), ten stall-fed oxen, twenty oxen out of the “ pastures, and an hundred sheep, besides harts, and roebucks, “ and fallow deer, and fatted fowl,” or (as Bochart translates the word) “ the choicest of all fatted things,” 1 Kings. iv. 22, 23.; and this, according to the calculation which some have made from the quantity of bread that was every day consumed, must make Solomon's family consist, at least, of forty or fifty thousand souls ; *Calmet's Commentary*.

A. M. from every quarter ; and to see the face, and hear the wisdom of the renowned Solomon, was the prevailing ambition of the great men of that age.

from Captivated with this desire the Queen of Sheba came to Jerusalem, attended with a great retinue, and brought with her rich presents of gold, spices, and precious stones. Her purpose was, to try if Solomon's wisdom was answerable to the high commendations she had heard of it ; and therefore in discourse she proposed to him several enigmatical questions. But when she heard his clear and satisfactory solutions, she was not a little amazed at the profoundness of his judgment; and when she had seen the beauty, and worship of the temple, the magnificence of his court, and the sumptuousness of * his table and attendants, she was quite astonished, and frankly owned to him, that what herself had seen did far surpass any the most extravagant report she had ever yet heard of him : And so, having made him very * great and noble presents, and received others from him, that were not inconsiderable, she took her leave, and returned to her own country, highly pleased and satisfied with her visit.

The idolatry he fell into by the influence of his foreign wives.

Hitherto we have seen nothing in Solomon but what was truly great and wonderful ; but the latter actions of his life do sadly tarnish and disgrace his character. For he gave himself up to the love of strange women, such as were de-

* Our excellent commentator, Bishop Patrick, tells us, that a very great man of our own (but is silent as to his name) has observed, that such things, as the difference of apparel, the order of sitting at table, and the attendance of Solomon's servants and ministers, were justly admired by the Queen of Sheba, as an indication of his wisdom ; “ for they are the outworks” (as he calls them) “ which preserves majesty itself from approaches and surprizals ; “ and whatsoever prince departs from these forms, and trappings, “ and ornaments of his dignity and pre-eminence, will hardly be “ able at some time, to preserve the body itself of majesty from intrusion, invasion, and violation.”

* After a very complementive speech, in which Josephus makes this queen address King Solomon, among other valuable presents recorded in Scripture, “ they speak also,” says he, “ of a root of balsam, which she brought with her, which” (according to a tradition we have) “ was the first plant of the kind that ever came into “ Judea, where it hath propagated so wonderfully ever since ;” *Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2.*

scended from idolatrous nations, and, besides Pharaoh's daughter † mentioned before, married wives from among the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Hittites, the Idumæans, and the Sidonians. Nay, so unbounded was his lust, that he had seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, who conspired not a little to pervert his heart, and seduce him, in his old age, to the worship of their several idols.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

Provoked at this his sad apostacy, God sent a prophet to upbraid him with his ingratitude, and to pronounce this heavy judgment upon him:—"That, as he had revolted from his worship, so the major part of his kingdom should revolt from him, and put themselves under the government of one of his servants, tho' not in his days, yet in those of his immediate successor:" And, to make him sensible that this judgment began already to operate, he raised up several enemies to the disturbance of his peace, which, as long as he continued in God's service, he enjoyed without interruption.

The first of these was Hadad * of the blood-royal of Edom, who having fled from Joab, when he ravaged the country,

The enemies which God raised up to disturb the latter part of his reign, and his death.

† Pharaoh's daughter is generally supposed to have been a proselyte to the Jewish religion, and therefore Solomon, in marrying her, incurred no fault; but, in marrying so many women besides, and these of a different religion, he committed two sins against the law; one in multiplying wives, and another, in marrying those of strange nations, who still retained their idolatry: And therefore, the wise son of Sirach, amidst all the encomiums that he heaps upon Solomon, could not forget this heinous iniquity, and terrible flaw in his character. *Thou didst bow thy loins to women, and, by thy body, thou wast brought into subjection. Thou didst stain thine honour, and pollute thy seed, so that thou broughtest wrath upon thy children, and wast grieved for thy folly;* Ecclus. xlvii. 19, 20.; and *Patrick's Commentary*.

* Hadad was a young prince of the royal family of Idumæa, who fled into Egypt when David conquered that country: For David, having obtained a signal victory under the conduct of Abishai, who, at that time, commanded in chief, sent Joab afterwards with an order to kill all the males that should be found in the land. But Hadad had escaped into Egypt, where, finding favour in the eyes of the king, he married his wife's sister, and there settled. But, after the death of David, he returned into Idumæa, and gave Solomon no small molestation. For entering

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Chriſt.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

country, and put the male children to death, eſcaped to Pharaoh king of Egypt, where he married his ſiſter Tephneh; but, upon David's death, returned to his own country, and recovered the kingdom. † The ſecond was Rezon, who flying from his maſter Hadadezer king of Zobah, gathered together a great number of men, over whom he made himſelf captain, and with their aſſiſtance, ſeizing on Damafcus, he there reigned as king of Syria, and confederated with Hadad to diſtreſs Solomon in the declining part of his reign. But † the moſt dangerous enemy of all was Jeroboam,

into a league with Rezon, a fugitive from his maſter Hadadezer king of Zobah, but who had now made himſelf king of ſome part of Syria, he, by his aſſiſtance, made ſo many inroads upon the land of Iſrael, that all things were in the utmoſt confuſion, even before Solomon died; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Joſephus's Jewiſh Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2.*

† When David made war againſt Hadadezer, Rezon, one of his generals, eſcaped from the field of battle, with the troops under his command; and, having lived for a little while by plunder and robbery, at length ſeized on Damafcus, and reigned there. But his reign was not long: For David took Damafcus, as well as the other parts of Syria, and left it in ſubjection to his ſon Solomon, till God was pleaſed to ſuffer this Rezon to recover Damafcus, and there reeſtabliſh himſelf, to the great diſturbance of the latter part of Solomon's reign; *Calmet's Com.*

† As Solomon was engaged in ſeveral great buildings, he took care to ſet proper perſons over the works, among whom Jeroboam was one, and the workmen under his command ſeem to be chiefly of the tribe of Ephraim. How he acquitted himſelf in this capacity, we are not told; but the pretence of his being angry with Solomon, and fomenting jealousies among the people, was the building of Millo. Millo was a deep valley, between the old Jeruſalem and the city of David, part of which David filled up, and thereupon made both a fortrefs, and a place for the people to aſſemble. Another part of it Solomon filled up, to build a palace for his queen, the daughter of Pharaoh. The prodigious expence which this work coſt gave Jeroboam an opportunity to infuſe a ſpirit of ſedition into his brethren of the tribe of Ephraim; to complain heavily of hard labour they were forced to ſubmit to, and the taxes they were obliged to pay; and to repreſent the whole thing as a work of vanity, merely to gratify a proud foreign woman, and a ſilly doting king; and, by theſe inſinuations, he wrought in the people

Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, a bold and enterprising man, whom Solomon had made overseer of his buildings, and who, for his great abilities, was the chief ruler in the house of Joseph, *i. e.* in the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. † The prophet Ahijah, as he was walking in the fields, happened to meet him; and, having acquainted him from God, that he had appointed him to be Solomon's successor in ten tribes out of twelve, and that, if he would adhere to his service, the government should be established in his family: As he was but ill-affected to Solomon before, and now encouraged by the prophet's promises, he began to stir and solicit the people to a revolt. † The king having intelligence of this, was thinking to take him into custody; but he made his escape, and fled † unto Shishack king

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

people a disaffection to Solomon, and his government; *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Millo*.

† Ahijah was a native of Shiloh, and one of those who wrote the annals of king Solomon's reign, 2 Chr. ix. 29. He is thought to have been the person who spake twice to Solomon from God; once while he was building the temple, at which time he promised him his protection, 1 Kings vi. 12.; and, at another time, when he had fallen into all his irregularities, and God expressed his indignation against him in bitter threats and reproaches, 1 Kings xii. 6. His prediction to Solomon, that he would one day be perverted by women; and that to Jeroboam, that heifers (meaning the two golden calves which he set up) would alienate him from the service of God, are both taken notice of by Epiphanius, *De vita et morte prophet.*; *Calmet's Dict.* under the word *Ahijah*.

† How Solomon came to know what was thus transacted between Ahijah and Jeroboam alone, is a question of no great difficulty: For perhaps the prophet made no scruple to report what he had delivered in the name of the Lord; perhaps Jeroboam himself, being puffed up with this assurance, could not contain, but told it to some of his confidants, who spread it abroad; or perhaps his servants, tho' they heard not the words that the prophet spake, yet, seeing him rend the garment into twelve parts, and give ten to him, might speak of this strange and unaccountable action, which Solomon, as soon as he came to hear of it, might easily understand, because the same prophet, very likely, had told him but just before, that the *kingdom should be rent from him*, and given to his servant, 1 Kings xiv. 8. *Patrick's Com.*

† All the kings of Egypt, from the time of Abraham, are, in the sacred history, called by the name of Pharaoh, unless
Rameses,

A, M. king of Egypt, where he continued for the small remainder
 3001, &c. of Solomon's life, † who, having reigned forty years, died
 Ant. Christ. about the fifty-eighth year of his age; was buried in the
 1003, &c. city of David; and was succeeded by his son † Rehoboam.
 from
 1 Kings viii. Rehoboam
 to the end
 of 2 Chron,

Rameses, that is mentioned in Gen. xlvii. 11. be the name of a king, not a country; so that this is the first we meet with, called by his proper name from the rest of the Pharaohs. Who this Egyptian prince was, the learned are not agreed. The opinion is pretty general, that it was the famous Sesostris, mentioned in Herodotus and of whom we have spoke before; but his life could hardly be extended to this period. Our great Usher sets him a vast way backward, even to the time of the Israelites peregrination, and some chronologers carry it farther: But, be that as it will, it is very probable, that the prince had taken some offence at Solomon, otherwise he would hardly have harboured such seditious refugees as Jeroboam was; *Patrick's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

† Josephus indeed tells us, (*Antiq. lib. viii. c. 3.*) that Solomon lived to a great age, that he reigned eighty years, and died at ninety-four; but this is a manifest error in that historian, which our saying, that the Scriptures give us only an account of Solomon while he continued in a state of piety, but that Josephus's computation takes in the whole of his life, is a poor and forced way of reconciling. The authority of Josephus must never be put in balance with that of the holy Scriptures, from whence may be learned, that Solomon lived to the age of fifty-eight, or thereabout; because we may very well presume, that his immoderate pursuit of sensual pleasures both shortened his life, and left an eternal stain upon his memory: Otherwise the character, which the author of Ecclesiasticus gives of this prince, is very beautiful:—*Solomon reigned in a peaceable time, and was honoured; for God made all quiet round about him, that he might build an house in his name, and prepare his sanctuary for ever. How wise wast thou in thy youth, and as a flood filled with understanding! Thy soul covered the whole earth, and thou filledst it with dark parables. Thy name went far unto the islands, and for thy peace thou wast beloved. The countries marvelled at thee for thy songs and proverbs, and parables, and interpretations. By the name of the Lord, which is called the Lord God of Israel, thou didst gather gold as tin, and didst multiply silver as lead: But thou didst bow thy loins unto women, &c.; Ecclus. xlvii. 13, &c.*

† Notwithstanding the vast multitude of wives that Solomon had, the Scriptures make mention of no more than three children, this son, and two daughters, that are spoken of 1 King iv. 11, 15, and (what is strange) in the beginning of his story, it takes

Rehoboam, as soon as his father was dead, went to † Shechem, where all the chief of the people were met together to proclaim him king; but as the nation had been burthened with some heavy taxes during his father's reign, before they would agree to recognise him, they † desired a redress of their grievances, and in hopes of awing him into a compliance, sent for Jeroboam out of Egypt to appear at the head of the assembly.

A. M. 3001, etc.
Ant. Chris. 1003, etc.
from 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.
Rehoboam, his son's accession to the throne, and imprudent management.

The

takes no notice (as usually it does) of his mother's nation, or family, though in the conclusion of it, (1 Kings xiv. 21.—31.) it twice reminds us, that she was an Ammonitess by birth, and that her name was Naamah. Rehoboam was born in the first year of his father's reign, and was therefore much about forty-one when he entered upon the government; but he was an unskilful and imprudent man, and therefore made a very false step at his first accession to the throne. The author of Ecclesiasticus gives us no advantageous character of him, when he terms him *A man void of understanding, who turned the people away with his counsel*, chap. xlvii. 23. Nay, his own son makes but a faint apology for him, when he tells the people, that he was *young* (young in understanding) *and tender-hearted, and could not withstand his enemies*, 2 Chron. xiii. 7.; and therefore some have imagined, that his father Solomon had him in his thoughts, when he said, in his Preacher, *I hated all my labour, which I had taken under the sun, because I was to leave it to a man that should come after me: And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man, or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour, wherein I have laboured: This also is vanity*; chap. ii. 18, 19.; *Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

† This city stood not only in the centre of the kingdom of Israel, but in the middle of the tribe of Ephraim, wherein there was the greatest number of malecontents. It was therefore very probably by the management of Jeroboam, or some of his friends, who durst not perhaps venture themselves at Jerusalem, that this city was made choice of for the place of a general convention, because they might more securely propose their grievances, (which they were resolved to do), and use a greater freedom of speech than they could at Jerusalem, where the family of David was more powerful, more numerous, and better supported; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Pool's Annotations*.

† What the particular grievances were that these people desired to have redressed, we may gather from 1 Kings iv. 7, &c. viz. the tribute Solomon exacted for his buildings, the expences of his family, and the maintenance of his chariots and horses,
which

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.
The revolt
of the ten
tribes, who
make Jeroboam their
king.

The people accordingly presented their address; but, instead of a gracious answer, (which his father's old counsellors by all means advised, as the only way to engage them to his interest for ever), † some young politicians, that had been * brought up with him, were of a contrary opinion, viz. that such concessions would look like fear and pusillanimity: that hard words would frighten them into obedience; and that, instead of redressing, his business was to tell them, that he intended to increase their grievances. This counsel Rehoboam had the imprudence to follow;

which being for the honour of the nation, ought to have been borne more contentedly by a people enjoying such a large share of peace and plenty, and from a prince who had brought in such vast riches to his subjects, as made silver to be of no value at all in his days, chap. x. 21. But people are more sensible of their pressures than of their enjoyments, and feel the least burdens when they are most at ease. It is observable, however, that among all their complaints, they take no notice of Solomon's idolatry, or the strange worship which he had introduced; though this, one would think, should have been reckoned among the greatest of their grievances; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† They were not so young, but they might have known better; for as Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he entered upon his kingdom, so these gentlemen having been brought up with him, must have been much about the same age; but they were raw and unexperienced, and unacquainted with the humours of the people; and therefore they gave the king such unseasonable advice; *Patrick's Commentary.*

* It was a common custom among the kings of the east, to have their sons educated among other young lords that were of the same age, which, as it created a generous spirit of emulation, and both endeared the prince to the nobles and the nobles to the prince, could not but tend greatly to the benefit of the public. Sesostris, the most famous prince that ever Egypt produced, is said to have been educated this way: And by the gallant youths that were his cotemporaries and fellow-pupils, it was, that he afterwards did so many surprising actions. The same custom was in use among the Persians, as we may learn from the life of Cyrus; and of Alexander the Great we are told, that his father Philip had him trained up in his youth, among those young noblemen who became his great captains in the conquest of all Asia. So that Solomon's method and design, in the education of his son, was wise and well-concerted, though it failed of success; *Calmet's Commentary.*

which

which so disgusted the people, that they threw off all allegiance, and declared for another king. When Rehoboam came to understand this, he † sent Adoram, his collector, to appease them, and probably to assure them, that their taxes should be abated; but this pacification came too late: Their passions were so exasperated, that they fell upon the collector, and stoned him to death, without so much as once hearing what he had to say. Rehoboam seeing this, thought it high time to consult his own safety, by † hastening to his chariot, and fleeing to Jerusalem; by which means he secured the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; but all the rest of the Israelites made choice of Jeroboam. And thus was this great and goodly kingdom, almost in its infancy, split into two parts; and, for ever afterwards, went under different denominations, *the kingdom of Judah, and the kingdom of Israel*, though the latter included the whole before.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end.
of 2 Chron.

As soon as Rehoboam had got safe to Jerusalem, he began to meditate revenge for the affront put upon himself in the person of Adoram his collector; and therefore (to reduce the rebel-tribes by force of arms) he put himself at the head of an hundred and eighty thousand chosen troops of the two tribes, which continued faithful to him. But while they were on their march, the † prophet Shemaiah, by the direction of God, advised them to desist, and return

† It was certainly a piece of great imprudence to send any one to treat with them, when they were so highly exasperated; but to send him that was an obnoxious man, as having the principal care of the very tributes they complained of, was downright infatuation; because nothing is so natural, as to hate those that are the instruments of our oppression, or any ways employed in it; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† This is the first time that we read of a king's riding in a chariot. Saul, David, and Solomon, rode in none; but after the division of the kingdom, mention is frequently made of the use of them, both by the kings of Judah and Israel; *Patrick's Comment*.

† This prophet was very well known in the reign of Rehoboam: He is supposed to have wrote the annals of that prince; and of what authority he was in Judah, we may gather from this passage, where he is said to have prevailed with the king, and an hundred and fourscore thousand men, to lay down their arms, and return home, merely by declaring, that the division which had happened was by the order and appointment of God; *Calmet's Commentary*.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

every one to his own home ; because by the divine will and pleasure it was, that this division of the kingdom came to pass. Hereupon all the army, with Rehoboam's consent, was disbanded ; and he, to secure the dominions that were left him, repaired and fortified fifteen frontier towns ; built several strong holds in the heart of his country ; furnished them with good garrisons and provisions ; and erected magazines in several cities, out of which the soldiers might, on all occasions, be supplied with arms.

Jeroboam
sets up two
golden
calves
at Dan and
Bethel.

Jeroboam, on the other hand, was not idle, but enlarged and beautified Shechem, and made it a royal city. After he had resided there for some time, he went to the other side of Jordan, and repaired Penuel, which was anciently a fortified place, and there resided likewise, in hopes of gaining the affections of the two tribes and an half. Amidst all these endeavours to settle himself firm on the throne, there was one thing he thought he had reason to apprehend, *viz.* that his subjects might return to their allegiance to the house of David, in case they were permitted to go up thrice every year, (as the law directed) to worship at Jerusalem ; he therefore made a bold alteration in religion, and set up two golden calves, (with altars belonging to them), the one in Bethel, which was the most southern, and the other in Dan, which was the most northern part of the country, the better to suit the convenience of all their votaries. The regular priests, however, would not comply with him in these idolatries, and therefore he inhibited them the exercise of their own religion, banished them his kingdom, seized on their possessions, and appointed † any, who was so minded, to officiate about these

† The Hebrew words *Miketzoth Haam*, do properly signify *out of all the people*, and not *the lowest of the people*. This exposition Bochart has justified by a great many examples of the uses of these words in other places : So that their meaning must be, not that Jeroboam employed the refuse of the people only, but that he employed any, though they were not of the tribe of Levi, though they had no previous qualifications to recommend them to officiate as priests about his idols. To employ the meanest of the people only in this office, had been bad policy, and exposing his new institution to contempt ; but to admit any that offered themselves, of what rank or quality soever ; to lay open the priesthood, and *destroy the needless distinction of men and things*, (as the modern phrase is), this had in it the air of free-thinking, and must therefore

these new-erected idols : By which means a great accession of strength accrued to Rehoboam's party ; for the priests that were banished resorted all to Jerusalem, and as many of the other tribes as had any regard to the true worship of God followed them.

To give the better countenance to his new-invented religion, Jeroboam himself was accustomed sometimes to officiate ; and therefore, on a † solemn feast, which he had appointed at Bethel, as he stood by the altar for that purpose, a certain † prophet, who came from Judah, foretold him, that that very altar which he had erected, should one day be polluted, and destroyed by a child, born of the house of

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.
At Bethel
his hand is
withered,
and restored
by the prophet from
Judah.

therefore be a very grateful thing, and ingratiate himself, no doubt, with the people ; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† As the Jews had their feast of tabernacles on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, so Jeroboam had a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, which he instituted of his own accord. Some suppose indeed, that as this feast was appointed by God to be observed after the gathering in of the fruits, which might be sooner ripe in Jerusalem than in the northern parts of the country, so Jeroboam might pretend, that the eighth month would be a better time for it than the seventh, because then they would every where be gathered. Others imagine, that he might have this farther design in the alteration of this month, viz. that the people of Judah, when their own feast was over, a month before at Jerusalem, might have an opportunity to come to his, if their curiosity led them. But the plain case is, that he did every thing he could in opposition to the established religion, and his chief intention was to alienate the people from Jerusalem ; *Bedford's Scripture Chronology, lib. vi. c. 2.*

† Who this prophet was, commentators are not agreed. The Jews would generally have it to have been Iddo ; but unless we may suppose that what is here related fell out in the latter end of Jeroboam's reign, Iddo could not be the person ; because Iddo was alive in the days of Ahijah, son of Rehoboam, whereas the prophet here spoken of died, in a manner as soon as he had delivered his prophecy. Others have thought that this prophet who came to rebuke Jeroboam was Ahijah, the same who had foretold him his exaltation to the crown of Israel : But besides that Ahijah was alive after the time that this prophet was slain, Ahijah was certainly a native of Shiloh, and lived in Shiloh, which is in the tribe of Ephraim, and part of Jeroboam's dominions ; whereas it is expressly said of this prophet, that he came from Judah : So that there is no foundation, so much as for a conjecture, what the name of this man of God was ; *Patrick's and Calmer's Commentaries*.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

David, † whose name, in future ages, should be Josias; and, for the proof of the truth of his prediction, he added, that immediately it should be split. Incensed at this freedom of speech, Jeroboam stretched out his hand, and called to those that stood by, to seize the prophet; but as he stretched it out, his arm grew so stiff, that he could not pull it back again, and the altar, being split asunder, let the fire, and the ashes that were thereon, fall to the ground.

Jeroboam by this means was sensibly convinced of his impiety, and intreated the prophet to intercede with God for the restoration of his hand. The prophet in this particular complied with his request; but when the king desired his company to dine with him, on purpose to make him a recompence for his miraculous cure, he declined the invitation, upon account of a positive divine injunction, that he should make no stay in the place, nor so much as to eat or drink in it, or † return by the same way.

In

† This is one of the most remarkable prophecies that we have in sacred writ. It foretells an action that exactly came to pass above three hundred and forty years afterwards. It describes the circumstances of the action, and specifies the very name of the person that was to do it; and therefore every Jew, who lived in the time of its accomplishment, must have been convinced of the divine authority of a religion founded upon such prophecies as this; since none but God could foresee, and consequently none but God could foretell, events at such a distance; *Le Clerc's* and *Calmet's* Comment.

† Why this prophet was forbid to eat or drink with the people of Bethel, the reason is obvious, because he was to have no familiarity with idolaters; but why he should not return by the same way that he went, is not so very evident. There is a passage in Isaiah concerning Sennacherib, which helps (as some think) to elucidate this matter, where God tells him, that *he would turn him back by the same way that he came*, Isaiah xxxvii. 29, 34. i. e. he should return home without doing any thing: All his threats, and all his great projects should have no effect against Jerusalem. And in like manner, when God commanded the prophet not to return by the same way, it was as much as if he had said, “ See “ that thou be constant, and steadfast in executing the charge “ committed to thee; let nothing hinder or divert thee, but “ take abundant care, that thou do thy business effectually.” But this construction is a little too much strained; nor can I see, why we may not say, that God enjoined his prophet not to return by the same way, lest Jeroboam or any other of the inhabitants of Bethel, either to satisfy their curiosity upon an occasion

In the town of Bethel there lived an old prophet, who when his sons came and told him what the man of God from Judah had done, † what had passed between him and the king, and what way he had taken in his return home, went in pursuit of him; and under the pretence of a fresh revelation which he had had, countermanding the injunction which the other thought himself under, invited him to his house. After some small demur the young prophet believed him, went with him, sat down to meat, and refreshed himself; but, in his return, he paid dear for his disobedience; for † a lion met him and slew him, but when it had so done, it neither tore his body, nor meddled with his ass; which when the old prophet understood, he took, and buried him in his own sepulchre, and gave his children in charge, that whenever he died, they should lay him in a place contiguous to this prophet; because he was confident, that whatever he foretold concerning the altar of Bethel, and ‖ that form of idolatry, which Jeroboam had set up, would most certainly come to pass.

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.
The prophet is slain by a lion, for his disobedience to the divine command.

Not

casion so uncommon, or to do him some mischief for his severe denunciations against their altar and way of worship, might send men after him to bring him back; *Calmet's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

† By this it appears, that these sons of the old prophet were present when Jeroboam stood at the altar, and therefore joined in that idolatrous worship, though their father did not, and yet was too timorous to reprove it; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Not far from Bethel there was a wood, out of which the two she-bears came that destroyed two and forty children for mocking the prophet Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 24. And it is not unlikely, that out of the same wood came the lion which slew this prophet; *Patrick's Commentary*.

‖ There is something particular in the expressions of the text: *The saying, which he cried by the word of God against the altar of the Lord, against the altar of Bethel, and against all the houses of the high-places, which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass*, 1 Kings xiii. 32. But how can they be called the cities of Samaria, when Samaria itself was not now built, nor had the separate kingdom of Jeroboam as yet obtained that name? But this only shews, that the author or compiler of these books of Kings (whether it was Ezra or Jeremiah) lived long after the time of Jeroboam, and writes of things and places as they were in his own days. He knew full well, that Samaria was built by Omri, fifty years after Jeroboam, since himself had given the account of its foundation; but he was minded to speak in the phrase

A. M. Not long after this, Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, a
 3001, etc. young † prince of promising hopes, fell sick : Whereupon
 Ant. Christ. Jeroboam prevailed † with his queen to disguise herself in
 1003, &c. the dress of an ordinary woman ; to go to the prophet A-
 from hijah, who was then at Shiloh ; and to inquire concerning
 1 Kings viii. the fate of the child. The prophet, at that time, was
 to the end blind ; and therefore they thought that they might very easily
 of 2 Chron. impose upon him : But before the queen came, God had
 Jeroboam's wickedness, discovered the whole matter to him ; and therefore, as soon
 and the death of his son Abijah, as she entered the door, he called her by her name, and
 then

then current, and to make himself intelligible to those that read him ; and for this reason no doubt it is, that in 2 Kings xxiii. 18. the false prophet of Bethel, is said to have come from Samaria, though at that time there was no city of that name ; *Calmet's Commentary.*

† In 1 Kings xiv. 13. it is said, that *in him there was found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel* ; from whence the Jewish doctors have devised the story, that he broke down an hedge (it had better been a wall I should think) which his father had made, to keep people from going up to Jerusalem at the three great feasts. But however this be, we may be permitted fairly to infer thus much from the words : — That he was the only person in the family who had expressed a dislike of the worshipping of calves, an inclination and intention to abolish it, whenever he should come into power, and to permit, if not oblige his subjects to go up to Jerusalem, to worship according as the law prescribed ; *Pool's Annotations.*

† Jeroboam might be for having his wife go to consult the prophet at Shiloh, because this was a secret not to be intrusted with any body else ; a secret, which, had it been divulged, might have endangered his whole government : Because, if once his subjects came to understand, that he himself had no confidence in the calves which he had set up, but, in any matter of importance, had recourse to the true worshippers of God ; it is not to be imagined, what an inducement this would have been for them to forsake these senseless idols, and to return to the worship of the God of Israel, whom they imprudently had forsaken. The queen then was the only person he could have confidence in. As a mother he knew, that she would be diligent in her inquiry ; and as a wife, faithful in her report ; but there were sundry reasons why he might desire her to disguise herself. For though Shiloh lay within the confines of Ephraim, yet there is sufficient ground to think, that it was subject to the house of David, and belonged to the kingdom of Judah. It was certainly nearer Jerusalem, than Schechem, which Rehoboam

then delivered the message which God had directed him to do. Therein he upbraided Jeroboam with ingratitude to God, who had made him king; charged him with impiety and apostacy, in setting up images for the objects of religious worship; foretold the extirpation of his race, and the death of the child then sick; threatened sore judgments to the people of Israel, for their conforming to the idolatry which had begun, and, with this doleful message, he sent her away, who, as soon as she entered the palace-door, (according to the prophet's prediction) found the child dying. But all these judgments and miraculous events wrought no reformation in wicked Jeroboam.

Nor was his rival, Rehoboam king of Judah, much better. He, for three years indeed, kept up the true worship of God at Jerusalem, but it was more out of a principle of state policy, than of true religion. For, when the time of Jeroboam's subjects coming over to him upon that account was at an end, he threw off the mask, and discovered his inclination to idolatry. And, as his example was followed by his subjects, they soon exceeded all that went before them. For they not only set up images and groves upon every hill, and under every green tree, but, to add to their gross impiety, introduced the detestable † sin of Sodom, and

Rehoboam had lately fortified, and made his place of residence: And therefore Jeroboam thought it not safe to venture his queen in a place that was under his rival's government, without her putting on some disguise. He knew too, that the prophet Ahijah was greatly offended at him for the gross idolatry he had introduced; and therefore he thought (as justly he might) that, if the prophet perceived her to be his wife, he would either tell her nothing, or make things much worse than they were. The only way, therefore, to come at the truth, was (as he thought) to do what he did: But herein appears his infatuation, that he should not think the person, whom he held capable of resolving him in the fate of his son, able to see through this guile and disguise; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Pool's Annotations*.

† There are several passages in Scripture, such as 1 Kings xv. 12. 2 Kings xxiii. 7. Rom. i. 26, 27. &c. from whence it appears, that this kind of wickedness did frequently attend idolatry. Among the Heathen, the most filthy things were committed in their groves, those places of darkness and obscurity, by the worshippers of Venus, Bacchus, and Priapus; and, when the Israelites fell into the same religion, they must, of course, have fallen into the same practices; because, whatever they did of this

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

Rehoboam's wickedness and death.

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end,
of 2 Chron.

and all the other wickednesses that the ancient Canaanites were expelled for.

Under these provocations it was not long before God sent against them Shishak, king of Egypt, who, in the fifth year of Rehoboam, † invaded his dominions with a very numerous army; and, having ravaged the country, taken most of the fortified places, and entered Jerusalem without opposition, plundered the temple and palace of their rich furniture and moveables, he took away all the money that was found in the king's treasure, and the treasure of the sanctuary, and, at the same time, carried off the golden shields which Solomon had made; in the room of which, Rehoboam, by this depredation, was reduced so low, that he † was forced to make brazen ones, for the use and ornament of his guards.

this kind was done in devotion, and honour to their gods, who, as they imagined, were highly delighted with such obscenities; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† It may seem something strange, that Shishak, who was so nearly allied to Rehoboam, should come up against him, and take his royal city: but Rehoboam, we must remember, was not the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and therefore no relation to Shishak. But, had he been nearly related, it is likely, that Jeroboam, who had lived long in Egypt, stirred him up to invade his rival, that thereby he might establish himself in his new kingdom: And, for this reason it was, that, when the armies of Egypt had taken the fenced cities of Judah, they returned, without giving Jeroboam or his dominions any the least disturbance; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† This shows to what a low condition the kingdom of Judah was reduced. These shields were a matter of state and grandeur; and therefore it concerned them, if they were able, to have them of the same value that they were before: And, as they were carried before the king to the house of the Lord, it seemed likewise to be a matter of religion, that their value should not be diminished. Now, in making these three hundred shields we are told, that three pound of gold went to one shield, 1 Kings x. 17. Thus, at four pounds per ounce, or forty-eight pound sterling to the pound, amounts to no more than 432,000 £.; and therefore it was a miserable case, that they were reduced from so much wealth to so much poverty, that neither reasons of state, nor religion, could raise so small a sum on so great an occasion; *Bedford's Scripture chronology, lib. vi. c. 2.*

We have little or nothing more recorded of Rehoboam, but that he reigned twelve years after this conquest and devastation by Shishak; that he had eighteen wives, and threescore concubines, and by them eight and twenty sons, and threescore daughters; that most of these sons (who were grown to maturity in his lifetime) he made governors in chief of the fenced cities in his kingdom; that he appointed Abijah (who was the eldest by his favourite wife Maachah) to succeed him in his throne, and, after a continued war with his rival Jeroboam, died in the fifty-eighth year of his age, and in the seventeenth year of his reign, and was buried in the city of David.

A. M.
3007, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

Abijah, who succeeded his father in the kingdom of Judah, in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, was a prince of an active and martial spirit; and therefore resolving to put an end to the long dispute between the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, he raised an army of four hundred thousand men, while Jeroboam, whose territories were of larger extent, had got together one of eight hundred thousand. This notwithstanding, Abijah determined to give him battle; but, before they came to the onset, he thought it not improper to get upon an eminence, and † to expostulate with the Israelitish army the injustice of their cause

He is succeeded by his son Abijah, who gains a great victory over Jeroboam, but soon after dies.

¶ But how does this agree with what we read in Kings xii. 23. &c. viz. that God commanded Rehoboam, and his people, not to fight against the Israelites, and they obeyed? Very well: if we will but observe, that, though the Jews were commanded not to make war upon the Israelites, yet they were not commanded not to defend themselves, in case the Israelites should make war upon them; and, considering that they were now become two rival nations, they might, upon the borders, be continually endeavouring to gain ground upon each other, and so run into frequent acts of hostility, without ever once engaging in a pitched battle; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† None of the great captains and commanders, whose speeches are recorded in Heathen authors, ever expressed themselves more movingly than this king of Judah did. But some have found fault with him for speaking not so honourably of his father's military skill and courage, which he might as well have omitted, because (allowing it to be true) he seems to have served no purpose in mentioning it: But this notwithstanding, the speech is very lively, and excellently well calculated to cause a revolt in Jeroboam's army. Josephus, who was no mean orator, and who in some speeches has improved upon the sacred historian, is quite outdone and surpassed in this, in-

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end.
of 2 Chron.

cause in revolting from his father Rehoboam ; the right he claimed on his side, since God had given the whole kingdom to David, and his sons forever ; and the reasonable expectance he had of the divine assistance in what he was going about, since the religion of Jeroboam was false and idolatrous, whereas he, and the men of Judah, had the pure worship of the living God, his temple, and his ordinances, among them.

Jeroboam was nowise solicitous to answer him in those points ; but, while he continued speaking, ordered a detachment to march round, and intercept his retreat : Which when the men of Judah perceived, they addressed themselves to God in prayer for success, and, while the priests blew the trumpets, the soldiers gave a great shout, and charged the Israelites so vigorously, that they soon gave way, and (as the enemy gave no quarter) lost, in the whole action, no less than five hundred thousand men, the greatest slaughter that ever was heard of.

This victory Abijah took care to improve by pursuing Jeroboam, and taking from him so many strong cities, (among which Bethel, where one of the golden calves had lately been set up, was one), that he was never thenceforward able to make head against his adversary, who by this, and some other successful achievements, grew great and powerful. But his reign was but short : He reigned not quite three years, before he died, and was buried in the city of David ; and the reason that some have assigned for God's thus shortening of his days, was his not destroying of idolatry, when, by taking of Bethel, he had it in his power. For, however he might plead his possession of the temple and priesthood, to make his argument good against Jeroboam ; yet the character which the sacred historian gives him, is *(a) that he walked in all the sins of his father ; nor was his heart perfect with the Lord his God, as the heart of his great grandfather David.*

Asa succeeds his father Abijah, and is a very religious prince.

Asa, however, who, in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, succeeded his father in the throne of Judah, was a prince of a different temper. As he enjoyed the felicity of a settled peace for the ten first years of his reign, he wisely made use of it in reforming many abuses

so much, that there is no room to introduce him, unless it be by way of foil to the original ; *Patrick's Commentary. Vide the speech at large in 2 Chron. xiii. 4. &c.*

(a) Kings xv 3.

that

that had been tolerated in former reigns. He expelled the Sodomites, broke down the idols, and demolished their altars in all the cities of Judah; || but he had not yet power and authority enough to destroy the high places. The vessels of silver and gold which † both he and his father had consecrated to the service of the temple, he presented to the priests; and, by all the enforcements of regal Authority, compelled his subjects to be religious.

A. M.
5001, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end.
of 2 Chron.

This time of peace he likewise made use of, to fortify several cities on the frontier parts of his kingdom, and to train up his subjects in the art of war; insomuch that, in a short time, he had an army of three hundred thousand men

|| This seems to be contradicted by a passage in 2 Chron. xiv. 3. where we are told, that *Asa took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places*: but, for the right understanding and reconciling of this, we may observe, that there were two kinds of high places, the one tolerated for religious purposes, the other abominable from their first institution; the one frequented by devout worshippers, the other made the receptacle of the wicked and idolatrous only. Now these were the altars and high places which Asa took away, even where the people sacrificed to strange God's; but those where God alone was worshipped had obtained so long, and were looked upon with so sacred a veneration, that, for fear of giving a general offence, (though he knew they were contrary to a divine injunction), he durst not adventure to abolish them. The truth is, these high places were famous either for the apparition of angels, or some other miraculous event; had either been places of abode for the ark of the Lord, or such as some prophet or patriarch of old had been accustomed to pray and sacrifice in; and therefore they were looked upon as consecrated to the service of God; nor was there strength enough in the government to overcome this inveterate prejudice, till Hezekiah arose, who (to prevent the calamities that were coming upon the nation) had the courage to effect a thorough reformation; *Patrick* on 1 Kings xv. 14.; and *Calmet* on chap. xiv. 23.

† According to the piety of ancient times, his father had devoted some part of the spoils he had taken in the war against Jeroboam to the service of the temple, but had not time to make good his vow, or, upon some account or other, had neglected it, so that his son took care to supply that defect. And so far as himself had taken large booty in his war with the Arabians, of this he likewise bestowed a considerable part upon holy uses; *Patrick's Commentary*.

A. M. 3001, etc. Ant. Christ. 1003, etc. from 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron. Gains a victory over the King of Arabia, and makes a thorough reformation in religion.

of Judah, armed with shields and pikes, and two hundred and fourscore thousand men of Benjamin armed with shields and arrows, all persons of courage, and resolved to defend their country.

In this situation of affairs, Zerah, the † King of Arabia invaded Judea with an almost innumerable army, but was vanquished by Aſa with a much inferior force. For, as ſoon as the battle began, God ſtruck the Arabians with ſuch a panic fear, that they began to flee; and Aſa and his army purſued them, took the ſpoil of their camp, carried away their cattle, ſmote the cities that were in league with them, and ſo returned in triumph to Jeruſalem.

After ſo ſignal a victory, Aſa continued in peace for the ſpace of five years more; in which time he thought himſelf obliged, both in gratitude to God, and in compliance to the encouragement (b) which his prophet Azariah had given him, to ſet himſelf about a thorough reformation in religion. To this purpoſe he executed all that could be convicted of ſodomy: he deſtroyed all the idols that were to be found, not only in Judah and Benjamin,

† The Scripture takes no notice of what was the cauſe of this war between Zerah and Aſa, nor are interpreters well agreed what the country was from whence this enemy came. The country, in the original, is called *Cuſh*, though we tranſlate it *Ethiopia*. Now, there are three countries, different from one another, all called by the name of *Cuſh*; 1. the land of Cuſh upon the river Gihon; 2. Cuſh upon the eaſtern ſhore of the Red Sea; and, 3. Cuſh, ſituate above Thebais, and in the Upper Egypt. It is very probable, then, that the country here ſpoken of muſt not be Ethiopia, properly ſo called, becauſe we can hardly imagine, how an army of a million of men ſhould be permitted to march through Egypt (as they muſt have done to invade Judea) without ſome oppoſition: And therefore the country muſt be the land of Cuſh, which lay in Arabia Petræa, upon the eaſt-ſhore of the Red Sea, and, at the extremity to the point of that ſea, inclining towards Egypt and Judea. And whereas ſome have made a doubt how ſo ſmall a country could have produced ſo large an army, it is no hard matter to ſuppoſe, that a great part of the army might perhaps have been mercenaries; *Calmet's Commentary* on 2 Chron. xiv. 9.; and *Dictionary*, under the word *Cuſh*. And *Wells's Geography of the Old Teſtament*, vol. i. chap. 4.

(b) 2 Chron. xv. throughout.

but

but in any of the conquered countries likewise : He repaired the altar of burnt-offerings, and summoned, not only natives, but strangers likewise, to the worship of the true God. On a solemn festival, which he had appointed, he ordered seven hundred oxen, and seven thousand sheep, part of the spoil which he had taken from the Arabians, to be sacrificed ; and, at the same time, engaged in a covenant with his subjects, (which was confirmed by oath), that whoever should forsake the true worship of God, should have (c) the sentence of the law executed upon him, and be infallibly put to death.

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

His own mother had been a patroness of idolatry ; and, therefore, to show his impartiality, he removed her from court, and forbade her coming near the Queen, for fear of infecting her ; and understanding that she had set up an idol in a grove consecrated to an obscene deity †, he burnt the idol,

(c) Deut. xvii. 2, &c.

† The words of the text, both in 1 Kings xv. 13. and 2 Chron. xv. 16. according to our translation, are to this effect.—That *Asa removed his mother Maachab from being Queen, because she had made an idol in a grove, both of which he cut down, and burnt.* The word which we render *idol* is in the original *Mipheletseth* ; but then the whole difficulty turns upon this, what the proper signification of this word is. The Vulgate translation has cleared this matter pretty well, by rendering the passage, that this Queen-mother *was the high-priestess in the sacrifices of Priapus* ; and when the Septuagint (according to the Vatican copy) informs us, that she held an assembly in this grove, and that her son *Asa* cut down all the close arbours, or places of retreat, as the word *Σύνωδος*, which we render *assembly*, may have a more carnal meaning, and the other *Κατάδυος*, properly signifies *hiding-places*, or *places of retirement for wicked and obscene purposes* : We may from hence infer, that both the Latin and Greek translators took the *Mipheletseth* of Maachab to be some lewd and lascivious deity, which loved to be worshipped in filthy and abominable actions ; and that this could be no other than the Roman Priapus (whose worshippers were chiefly women) seems to be implied in the very etymology of the word, which properly signifies *terriculamentum*, or *a device to frighten other things away* ; for this was exactly the office of Priapus in all gardens.

Pomosisque ruber custos ponatur in hortis,

Terreat ut sævâ falce Priapus aves. *Tibul. Eleg. 1.*

But then the question is, who the patriarch was, (for most idols were made for some patriarch or other) that the Roman Priapus is thought

A. M.
3601, etc.
Ant. Chriſt.
1003, etc.

from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

idol, and the grove both, and threw their aſhes into the brook Kidron, (d) as Moſes did before by the molten calf.

The

thought to repreſent? And the learned author (from whom I have compiled this note) is of opinion, that it might properly enough denote *Lot*, who lay with his two daughters when he was drunk, and of the former begat Moab, the primogenitor of that nation, who were the greateſt worſhippers of this obſcene deity: though, for ſeveral reaſons that he there enumerates, (upon preſumption that Priapus was the ſame with Baal-Peor, which ſignifies *a naked or uncovered god*), he is more inclinable to think it was Noah, of whom it was ſaid, that *he was an huſbandman, and planted a vineyard, and that he drank of the wine, and was drunken, and uncovered within his tent*, Gen. ix. 20, 21.; Jurieu Hiſt. des dogmes et cult. part iv. c. 2. and 3. Moſt of the ancients are of opinion, that Aſtoreth, which all allow to be the ſame with Aſtarte, was the Greek *Κύπρις*, and the Roman Venus. Tully, in his third book *De natura Deorum*, tells us expreſsly, that Aſtarte, among the Tyrians, was the fourth Venus, who was married to Adonis, and upon his, and ſome other authorities, many moderns have gone into the ſame ſentiment; but, as it is certain, that the Tyrians had their theology from the Phœnicians, the teſtimony of St. Auſtin cannot but have ſome weight in this caſe, ſince he affirms, with the greateſt aſſurance, That Juno, without all doubt, was, by the Carthaginians, called *Aſtarte*; *Quæſt. 26. in indices*. That Juno was the great deity and patroness of Carthage, is the received opinion of the Gentile world.

Quam Juno fertur terris magis omnibus unam

Poſthabitâ coluiſſe Samo, &c.

Virg. Æn. i.

And therefore, ſince we find Baal, who is the ſame with Jupiter, ſo frequently in Scripture joined with Aſhtaroth, which is the ſame with Aſtarte, we can hardly refrain thinking, that ſhe muſt be the Roman Juno; and they, conſequently, huſband and wife: How extravagant ſoever, therefore, the frolic of Heliogabalus (mentioned by Herodotus) was, in ſending for the goddeſs of the Carthaginians to be married to his god, who was the Jupiter of the Phœnicians; yet, from this piece of hiſtory, we may inform ourſelves, that the goddeſs of the Carthaginians was no other than Juno, the ſuppoſed wife of Baal, or Jupiter; and therefore we find her, by the Phœnician hiſtorian Sancho-niatho called Baaltis, which is a feminine ſubſtantive, formed from the word *Baal*, and by the ſacred writers, *the queen of heaven*, Jer. vii. 18. and xlv. 18. We have ſufficient grounds therefore to ſuppoſe, that this Aſtarte was Juno; but then

(d) Exod. xxxii. 20.

what

The fame of this reformation, and the blessings where-
with God had hitherto distinguished Aſa's reign, made
the ſubjects of Baasha (who was now King of Iſrael) come
over in great numbers to Jeruſalem; which Baasha per-
ceiving, was reſolved, if poſſible, to put a ſtop to it; and
therefore he fortified Ramah, a town in the tribe of Ben-
jamin ſo conveniently ſituated, that, by keeping a good
garrifon there, he might hinder all paſſing to and fro with-
out leave, and ſo cut off all communication between his
people and the people of Judah.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Chriſt.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

Aſa hearing of this, and knowing the intent and pur-
poſe of the ſtratagem, was reſolved to give him a diverſion,
if he poſſibly could, on the other ſide. To this end he
took all the ſilver † and gold that was in the temple, as
well as what was found in his own exchequer, and ſent it as
a preſent to Benhadad King of Syria, requeſting his af-
ſiſtance againſt Baasha. The largeneſs of the preſent

Engages
Benhadad's
aſſiſtance a-
gainſt Baa-
sha, which
diſpleaſes
God.

what particular woman this Juno was, before ſhe came to be
deified, we are at a loſs to know: Only the conjecture of the
learned author (from whom I have extracted this note) ſeems
to be preferable to any other I have yet met with, viz. that as
both Baal and Jupiter are generally allowed to be the Patriarch
Ham, ſo this Juno or Aſtarte, in all probability, was one of his
wives, from whom the Canaanites and Phœnicians were deſcend-
ed. But in this we have the leſs certainty, becauſe the ſacred
hiſtory ſays nothing of the adventures of the poſtdiluvian matrons,
whereby we might be enabled to form a comparison between
them and theſe fabulous goddeſſes; *Jurieu, ibid.* part. iv. c. 5.

† In caſes of extreme danger, it was always held lawful to
employ ſacred things in the defence of one's country: but there
was no ſuch neceſſity in this caſe. God had appeared wonder-
fully in Aſa's defence, againſt an enemy much more powerful
than Baasha was. Nay, he had promiſed him his protection at
all times, and ſucceſs in all his undertakings, if he would but
adhere to his ſervice; and yet, forgetting all this, he ſtrips the
temple of its treaſure, and bribes a Heathen prince to come to his
aſſiſtance, and break his league with another to whom he ſtood
engaged: ſo that here were three offences in this one act of A-
ſa's. For, 1^{ſt}, he alienated things conſecrated to God without
neceſſity. 2^{dly}, He did this out of a carnal fear and diſtruſt of
that God whoſe power and goodneſs he had lately experienced.
And, 3^{dly}, he did it with an intent, even to hire Benhadad to a
breach of his league and covenant with Baasha; *Pool's Annota-*
tions.

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003; &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

soon had its effect: For Benhadad immediately attacks several cities in Israel with such success, that Baasha was forced to abandon his new designs of fortifying his frontiers towards Judah, in order to defend the other parts of his kingdom that were thus furiously invaded; which gave Afa an opportunity to demolish the works that were begun at Ramah, and with the materials that Baasha had prepared to build him two cities in his own dominions, Gebah and Mispah.

This applying, however, to Benhadad for assistance was, in Afa, a thing inexcusable. It implied a distrust of God's power or Goodness to help him, of which he had had so lately so large an experience; and therefore the prophet Hanani was sent to reprove him for it: But instead of receiving his reproofs with temper and thankfulness, he was so exasperated with them, that he put the prophet in chains, and gave orders, at the same time, for the execution of several of his subjects.

Grows peevish, and passionate towards the end of his reign, and after his death, orders his body to be burnt.

The truth is, towards the close of his reign, he grew very peevish and passionate, and uneasy with those that were about him; which, charity would be apt to think, proceeded from his distemper; a severe gout, (in all probability), whose humour rising upwards, killed him in the one and fortieth year of his reign. He was succeeded by his son Jehosaphat: But instead of being interred, (as the manner of the Jews was), † he ordered his body to be burnt with

† The words in the text are these, — *They laid him on the bed, which was filled with sweet odours, and divers kinds of spices, prepared by the apothecaries art; and they made a great burning for him,* 2 Chron. xvi. 26. But then the question is, whether the body itself was burnt, or only some spices and odoriferous drugs, to prevent any bad smell that might attend the corpse. The Greeks and Romans indeed, when they burnt any dead bodies, threw frankincense, myrrh, cassia, and other fragrant things into the fire, and this in such abundance, that Pliny (Nat. hist. cap. 18.) represents it as a piece of profaneness, to bestow such heaps of frankincense upon a dead body, when they offered it so sparingly to their gods. The Jews, however, (say the maintainers of this side of the question), were accustomed to inter, and not to burn their dead, though they might possibly learn from the Egyptians the usage of burning many spices at their funerals, as we find they did at the funeral of Zedekiah king of Judah, Jer. xxxiv. 5.; but notwithstanding this, some very

with great quantities of perfumes, and spices, and his bones and ashes to be collected, and buried in a sepulchre which he had provided for himself in the city of David.

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.

During the long continuance of Aſa's reign, ſundry ſucceſſions and revolutions happened in the kingdom of Iſrael, whereof the ſacred hiſtory has given us but a ſhort account. In the firſt or ſecond year of Aſa, died Jeroboam, of ſome acute diſeaſe, which the Scripture does not ſpecify. His reign was famous (or infamous rather) for the revolt of the ten tribes, the public inſtitution of idolatry, and the terrible defeat which Abijah gave him, and which he himſelf ſeems not long to have ſurvived. He was ſucceeded by his ſon Nadab, a perſon who took care to imitate his father in all his wickedneſs; but his reign was not long. In leſs than two years he was treacherouſly killed by Baaſha, his captain-general, who uſurped his crown, and to maintain himſelf in that uſurpation, put every one that was related to his predecessor to death; which was certainly a very wicked and barbarous act, though it proved the accompliſhment of the prophecy † which Ahijah had denounced againſt Jeroboam's houſe.

from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.
The wicked
kings, who
reigned in
Iſrael during
this
period.
Jeroboam.
Nadab.

Baasha.

In

very able commentators are of opinion, that all theſe ſpices and perfumes were burnt along with Aſa's body; and they remark, that among his other offences, the ſacred hiſtory takes notice of this vanity of his, in ordering his body to be diſpoſed of according to the manner of the Gentiles, and not of his own people. Though therefore they ſuppoſe that Aſa was the firſt who introduced this cuſtom; yet, in after-ages, it became very frequent, and was thought the more honourable ceremony of the two, 2 Chron. xxi. 19. Ibid. xvi. 14. Amos vi. 10. *Patrick's and Calmet's Commentaries on 2 Chron. xvi. 14.*

† 1 Kings xiv. 10, 11. The prophecy runs thus, *Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the houſe of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that piſſeth againſt the wall, and him that is ſhut up and leſt in Iſrael, and will take away the remnant of the houſe of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone. Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city, ſhall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field, ſhall the fowls of the air eat:* For the Lord hath ſpoken it. The only difficulty here is, how Baaſha's exaltation to the kingdom of Iſrael can be aſcribed to God, (as it is 1 Kings xvi. 2.), *Forasmuch as I have exalted thee out of the duſt, and made thee prince over my people Iſrael*), when it is manifeſt that he got it by his own treachery and cruelty.

A. M.
3011, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003; etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.
Elah.
Zimri.

|| In the six and twentieth year of king Afa, Baasha died, and was succeeded by his son Elah, a vicious and debauched prince, that, in the second year of his reign, (as he was carousing in his steward's house), was assassinated by Zimri, a considerable officer of horse, who, to secure the kingdom to himself, † cut off all Baasha's friends and relations: But he had not taken care (as Baasha did)

But to this may be replied, that though the manner of invading the kingdom was from himself, and his own wicked heart; yet the translation of the kingdom from Nadab to Baasha (simply considered) was from God, who, by his decree and providence, ordered it, and disposed of all occasions, and of the hearts of all the soldiers and the people so, that Baasha should have opportunity of executing his judgments upon Nadab, and such success thereupon as should procure him a present and quiet possession of the kingdom. So that his accession to the kingdom was from the divine decree, but the form and manner of his accession was from himself, from his own ambition and covetousness; and as it was wicked and cruel, is therefore charged upon him as a wilful murder, ver. 7.; *Pool's Annotations*.

|| And yet Baasha's expedition against Afa, in order to build Ramah, is said to be in the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Afa, 2 Chron. xvi. 1. Now to reconcile this, some would have that six and thirtieth year to relate, not to Afa's reign, but to the date of the kingdom of Judah, from the division of the kingdom of Israel, at Rehoboam's coming to the crown, and to be (in fact) no more than the fourteenth year of the reign of Afa. But that cannot be, since this expedition of Baasha was some time after Afa had defeated the king of Ethiopia, or Arabia, and yet this defeat happened in the fifteenth year of King Afa's reign: So that that six and thirtieth year of Baasha's going up to build Ramah, can, by no good computation, be the fourteenth year of King Afa's reign. And therefore (without any more to do) we may, with Josephus, and others, adventure to say, that the occasion of this difference proceeds from the mistake of some transcriber; *Howell's History*, in the notes.

† One part of the threat which the prophet Jehu denounces against Baasha is, as we see, that God would *make his house like the house of Jeroboam*, 1 Kings xvi. 3. and that exactly came to pass: For as Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, reigned but two years, so Elah, the son of Baasha, reigned no more: And as Nadab was killed by the sword, so was Elah: So wonderful a similitude was there between Jeroboam and Baasha, in their lives and in their deaths, in their sons and in their families; *Patrick's Commentary*.

to gain the army (which was then besieging † Gibbethon) over to his interest, so that when they heard of the news of the king's death, they declared for Omri their general. He immediately raised the siege, and marching to Tirzah, the then royal city, soon made himself master of it; so that Zimri seeing all lost, and despairing of any quarter from the enemy, retired to the palace †, which he set on fire, and after a reign of seven days only was consumed in it.

A. M.
3001, etc.
A. D. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

Omri, however, found it not so easy a matter to get the throne, as he expected. Half the Israelites declared for Tibni, the son of Ginah, which occasioned a civil war for four years, till having vanquished and slain his rival Tibni, he came to reign without a competitor. But his reign must be acknowledged to have been very wicked, when we find it recorded of him, that he not only walked in the way of Jeroboam, (e) but did worse than all before him. He very probably began to introduce other and more abominable idolatries than were then in use, which are therefore called the (f) *the works of the house of Ahab*. He compelled the people to worship the golden calves; and by severe laws (which are called (g) *the statutes of Omri*) restrained them from going up to Jerusalem: And because the royal palace at Tirzah was destroyed, he bought of one Shemer a piece of rising ground, whereon he built a palace for his own habitation, which, in a short time increasing to a city, was, from its first owner, called in Hebrew *Sho-*

† This was a city in the tribe of Dan, and given to the Levites for their habitation, Josh. xix. 44. and xxi. 23.; but they seem to have quitted it, as they did the rest of the cities, when Jeroboam would not suffer them to exercise their office, and the Philistines, it is likely, then seized upon it, as being adjoining to their country. It seems, however, to have been a place of no inconsiderable strength, since we find that it maintained a siege for three kings reigns successively, though with some interruption, 1 Kings xvi. 15, 16.

† Some interpreters would rather have it, that Omri set the royal palace on fire, in order to burn Zimri in it, who had retired thither. The Hebrew words indeed will bear that construction; but the other sense seems more likely. Nor has profane history forgot to preserve the memory of some princes, who have chosen to die in this manner, rather than fall by the word, whereof Sardanapalus is one of the most ancient and most notorious examples; *Calmet's Commentary*.

(e) 1 Kings xvi. 25.

(f) Micah vi. 16.

(g) Ibid.

A, M. *meron*, but, according to the Greeks, and our translation, 3001, &c. * *Samaria*, and was ever after made a place of the king's Ant. Christ. residence, and the metropolis of the Israelitish kingdom. 1003, &c.

from
1 Kings viii. In the eight and thirtieth year of King Aſa, Ahab ſucceeded his father Omri, and in wickedneſs excelled all his predecessors. But of him we ſhall treat at large in our next chapter, and chuſe to conclude here with this obſervation,

to the end
of 2 Chron.

— That though, while Aſa reigned in Judah, Iſrael was in the hands of ſeven or eight ſeveral princes, *viz.* Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Tibni, Omri, and Ahab; yet ſuch was their hardneſs in ſin and idolatry, that in all theſe changes, they never once thought of returning to the houſe of David, or the worſhip of the true God at Jeruſalem.

The OBJECTION.

“ JEROBOAM, no doubt, was a very politic man; and the
“ division which he brought about, in the Jewish monarchy, was a matter of no ſmall contrivance: But ſtill
“ his ſetting up calves as objects of divine worſhip, in order
“ to keep his people at home, and to prevent their returning to the houſe of David, and the temple of Jeruſalem,
“ was the moſt ſenſeleſs and abſurd project that ever en-

* It is ſomewhat wonderful, that, when Omri bought this place of Shemer, whereon he intended to build a city, he did not call it by his own name, unleſs we may ſuppoſe, that, when Shemer ſold it, he let him have the greater bargain of it, upon condition that it ſhould be continued in its firſt owner's name. However this be, it is certain, that as Samaria was ſituated in the miſt of the tribe of Ephraim, on a fruitful and pleaſant hill, it ſoon became the regal and capital city of the kingdom of Iſrael; nor did its king omit any thing to make it as ſtrong as ſine, and as rich as poſſible. What fate it underwent by Benhadad king of Syria; by Salmanaſſar king of Aſſyria; and by one of the Maccabean family; by Herod the Great, who rebuilt and beautified it; by Auguſtus Cæſar, and by the Emperor Adrian, under whom it finally fell; we ſhall ſee in a great meaſure, in the courſe of this hiſtory. It is conjectured by Bochart, (who traced the ruins of it), to have been once larger than Jeruſalem, but now it conſiſts of nothing but a few cottages and convents, inhabited by ſome Greek monks; *Wells's Geography of the Old Teſtament*, vol. iii.

“ tered

“tered into any wise man’s head. The temple of Jerusalem had not, at this time, been finished above thirty years, and persons enough there were alive who had been eye-witnesses, at its dedication, of the glory of the Lord, which not only filled the sanctuary, but the very courts adjoining, *(h)* so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud : And how could he then think of making these people believe, that the image of a calf was equally a symbol of the divine presence? How indeed could they but think, that the king was making a parcel of dupes of them, when, upon the erection of these dumb idols, he could have the confidence to tell them, *(i)* Behold, thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of Egypt !

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

“Israel had already suffered too much by a dangerous practice of this kind. The sin of the molten calf had cost their forefathers no less *(k)* than three thousand lives ; and in every calamity that befel their posterity, some grains of this wicked idol they always thought were mingled in it. And can we imagine, that they would so easily be inveigled into the like abomination again ; that they would make so quick a transition from the worship of the true God to the grossest idolatry, and not rather look upon Jeroboam as their mortal enemy, that was going to bring upon them some heavy judgment, by attempting to introduce a thing, which, when they considered the fate of their ancestors, was enough to make them tremble ?

“Had he done, indeed, as † Sanballat, we find, in after-times did, built an handsome temple in some commodious

* *(h)* 1 Kings viii. 11. *(i)* Ibid. xii. 28. *(k)* Exod. xxxii. 28.

† This Sanballat was a native of Horon, or Horonaim, a city beyond Jordan, in the country of the Moabites, and by Darius made governour of the Cuthites, or Samaritans. He had a daughter married to a son of the high-priest Joiada, whom Josephus calls Manasseh ; but when Nehemiah began his reformation, wherein he obliged all that had taken strange wives, either to dismiss them immediately, or to depart the country, Manasseh, with some others that were in the same circumstances, fled to Samaria, and there settled under the protection of Sanballat, who obtained leave (of Alexander, says Josephus, but our learned Prideaux makes it of Darius) to build on mount Gerizim, near Samaria, a temple, in imitation of that

A. M. 3001, etc. Ant. Chris. 1003, etc. from 1 Kings viii. to the end. of 2 Chron.

“ commodious place, and taken in priests and Levites to officiate therein; this might have been some temptation for the people to stay with him: But, instead of this, to have recourse to that old invention, for which their forefathers had smarted so severely, was a practice so absurd, so unpopular, so dangerous, so odious, so sure to give disgust, and so apt to raise a general revolt, that Jeroboam must certainly have been a man too wise and politic ever to attempt it.

“ For the same reason we can hardly credit the story of Pharaoh’s taking cities from the Philistines, and giving them to Solomon, as part of his daughter’s portion. This king of Egypt (be he who he will) might possibly be a warlike prince: But the country of the Philistines (and Gezer in particular) lay so far distant from him, and so little deserved any military expedition, that we cannot but think, that there is some mistake in the sacred account, as to the person that was the aggressor; especially considering, that there is a palpable error in the supposed result of this expedition, which was the bestowing the conquered cities, as a portion for Pharaoh’s daughter; whereas it was a known custom in those days, for women to have no dower, but, whoever espoused them, was to purchase them of their parents.

“ Pharaoh might do this in gallantry perhaps, because his daughter was going to be married to a prince of Solomon’s high renown; but it looks as if his esteem for that alliance soon abated, when we find him making his country a common refuge for all Solomon’s discontented subjects; and even not refusing protection to his most inveterate enemy Jeroboam. Strange it is indeed, that Solomon should have so little interest in the Egyptian court, as not to be able to prevail with the King, who was his father-in-law, to deny his protection to such persons as were conspiring the subversion of his government.

“ But the strangest story of all is, the Queen of Sheba’s coming to visit Solomon, and bringing with her a bundle of ænigmas and riddles, for this prodigious prince to resolve. For supposing the woman imprudent enough to leave her kingdom (which is seldom safely done)

at Jerusalem, whereof he made his son-in-law Manasseh high-priest. But of this we shall have occasion, in the course of this history, to treat more at large.

“ merely

" merely to gratify a petulant curiosity, yet can we think, A. M.
 " that Solomon, who studied so hard as to become a per- 3001, etc.
 " fect master of almost all the learned sciences, (for so the Ant. Chris.
 " Scripture represents him, 1 Kings iv.), should have no- 1003, etc.
 " thing else to do, but to answer every impertinent woman, from
 " that came with her quibbles, and questions to him? 1 Kings viii.
 " The historian however has taken care, that we should to the end.
 " not detect the fallacy of this remarkable adventure, of 2 Chron.
 " by concealing the age, the religion, and the very
 " country, where this romantic lady lived.

" Solomon, no doubt, was a very wise man, and yet
 " we cannot but think, that he laid the foundation for his
 " own unhappiness, as well as impiety, when he multiplied
 " wives to such a prodigious degree. For it is hard to
 " conceive, to what use and purpose such a number of them
 " should serve, unless it were to scold and quarrel, and
 " put the whole house in an uproar : And tho' it must be
 " owned, that he is one of the top characters of the sacred
 " history, yet we cannot but wonder, why he is so far
 " neglected at last, as to be dropt, all on a sudden, with-
 " out any the least intimations of his repentance, or non-
 " repentance, of the happiness or misery of his future
 " state ; which, considering the odd mixture of the man,
 " and a life so egregiously chequered with good and evil,
 " (as his was), must not have failed of, giving great satis-
 " faction to every pious reader.

" Whatever wild enthusiasts may think, the Spirit of
 " God, in our opinion, never takes possession of fools ;
 " and yet how shall we account for that humour of the
 " prophet Ahijah, in tearing his coat (and his best coat
 " too) into twelve pieces, when he came to deliver his
 " message to Jeroboam ? Whatever energy may be pre-
 " tended in this emblematical action, for our hearts we
 " cannot but think, that the business might have been ex-
 " pressed in words at length, and the man obtained a fa-
 " vourable audience, and attention to what he had to say,
 " as well without it ; for, (according to our sentiments of
 " things), to see any one, at our first salutation, fall a
 " tearing and rending his cloaths to rags, would make us
 " turn from him as a madman, rather than listen to him
 " as a prophet.

" But whatever may become of the conduct of this
 " prophet, our study must be to preserve the attributes of
 " God inviolate ; and yet they seem to be in apparent dan-
 " ger,

A. M. 3001, etc.
Ant. Chris. 1003, etc.
from 1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

ger, if, after a most signal manner, (l) God should destroy a true prophet, merely for suffering himself to be persuaded by another prophet, who pretended equally to a divine revelation, and came to ask nothing of him but what he might reasonably have expected. For might not the prophet from Judah (as he found himself hungry and weary) be apt to think, that God, in compassion to him, had revoked his prohibition, and now, that he had executed the main part of his charge, allowed him the liberty of refreshing himself? This the old prophet affirms, and affirms that he had it from an angel; and therefore, if there was any iniquity in the thing, on him should the punishment have fallen: And yet he is acquitted, or, at least, no harm lights upon him, whilst the other, that is innocently deceived, falls a prey to a lion, and (m) *his carcase does not come into the sepulchres of his fathers.*"

Answered,
by shewing
how Jeroboam came
to set up
idolatry.

The Jewish doctors have a tradition, that after Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, had left Shechem in haste, and made the best of his way to Jerusalem, Jeroboam called a council, consisting partly of pious, and partly of wicked men; that, in this council, he proposed, whether they would agreed, and subscribe to all that he should appoint; that to this they declared their assent, and he thereupon constituted himself king; that when he proposed farther, whether, if he should establish idolatry, they would agree and consent to it, the pious party were shocked, and began to express their indignation; but that their wicked neighbours in the council pacified them, by whispering in their ears, "That Jeroboam had no intention to set up idolatry, but only mentioned it in a comparative sense, and with a design to try the extent of their obedience." So that by this fraud, the pious people in the council were drawn in, and even Ahijah himself prevailed on to subscribe implicitly to whatever Jeroboam should think fit to enact; by which means he took an occasion (as the iniquity of the times favoured him not a little) to establish idolatry by a law.

Solomon, we all agree, was a man of great fame for his knowledge, and yet, in the very maturity of his age, he discovered a strong inclination to idolatry, which could not but make a bad impression upon the minds of his subjects,

(l) Christianity as old as the creation, p. 328. (m) 1 Kings xiii. 22.

when

when they saw the preference that was given to it by so wise a prince. His son Rehoboam was the issue of a woman that sprung from an infamous nation, an Ammonitess by birth, who (as far as it appears) was never a proselyte; and, having a great hand in her son's education, might give him a deep tincture of her own sentiments: for, in his reign, we read, that *(n)* *the people built them high places, on every high hill, and under every green tree, and did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel*; which they durst not have done, had the king discountenanced them by his own example.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings. vii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

After a succession of such idolatrous princes, in the reign of King *Josiah*, *(o)* *the book of the law was found in the house of the Lord*, at which Hilkiah, the high-priest, seemed to express an uncommon joy and wonder: And though this might possibly be the authentic copy, *(p)* which, by God's command, was laid up in the sanctuary, yet how much the reading of it in any copy was at any time disused, we may gather from what the historian tells us of the King, viz. that *(q)* *when he had read the words of the book of the law, he rent his cloaths*; and, by a parity of reason, we may infer, that what through the bad example of their kings, who gave life and encouragement to idolatrous practices, and what through the negligence of the people, in not perusing the books wherein the transactions of former times were recorded, the generation we are now speaking of might have forgot the history of Aaron's molten calf, and the punishment pursuant thereupon, and might therefore be induced to worship another without any dread or apprehension of danger.

How the figure of a calf, or any other animal, can be a symbol of a deity, it is difficult to conceive. But a certain learned *(r)* author, who seems a little singular in his opinion, will needs have it, that the golden calves which Jeroboam made, were in imitation of the cherubims (in his account these were winged oxen) Moses had placed upon the ark of the covenant, whereon the glory of the Lord sat enthroned. These cherubims in the tabernacle of Moses, and afterwards in Solomon's temple, were placed in the sanctuary, and secreted from vulgar sight: But Jeroboam, to

Why he chose the figure of a calf for his idols;

(n) 1 Kings xiv. 23, 24. *(o)* 2 Kings xxii. 8. *(p)* Deut. xxxi. 26. *(q)* 2 Kings xxii. 11. *(r)* Monseus, in Arone purgato, lib. i. c. 8.

A. M. make his religion more condescensive, placed his calves in
 3001, etc. open view, so that every one who looked on them might,
 Ant. Chris. through them, worship the God of Israel, without repair-
 1003, etc. ing to the temple of Jerusalem.

from
 1 Kings viii. This notion (if it were true) would make the transition
 to the end easy from the worship at Jerusalem to the worship at Dan
 of 2 Chron. or Bethel; but we can hardly imagine, that Jeroboam had
 either so harmless or so conformable a design in setting up
 these golden images. Whatever his design was, it is cer-
 tain, that the Scripture, all along, represents him as, of
 all others, the principal person that (s) *made Israel to sin*;
 that (t) *drew Israel from serving the Lord, and made them*
sin a great sin: And therefore we may observe, that when-
 ever it describes a bad prince, one part of his character is,
 that he imitated the sin of *Jeroboam the son of Nebat*, (u)
who (as the prophet upbraids his wife) *went and made him*
other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and to
cast me behind his back, saith the Lord.

The truth is, Jeroboam had lived a considerable time in
 the land of Egypt, had contracted an acquaintance with
 the king thereof, and formed an interest among the peo-
 ple; and therefore, finding himself under a necessity of
 making an alteration in the established religion of his coun-
 try, he thought it the wisest method to do it upon the E-
 gyptian model, that thereby he might endear himself to
 that nation; and in case he met with opposition from his
 rival Rehoboam, might hope for resistance from that quar-
 ter. For, as the Egyptians had two oxen which they wor-
 shipped, one called *Apis*, at Memphis, the metropolis of
 the Upper-Egypt; and another called *Mnevis*, at Hierapo-
 lis, a principal city of the Lower; so he made two calves
 of gold, and placed one of them in Bethel, which was in
 the south, and the other in Dan, which was in the north
 part of the country of Israel.

And set
 them up at
 Bethel and
 Dan. There were these farther reasons likewise that might de-
 termine him in the choice of these two places. Dan was
 a town famous (x) for the Teraphim of Micah, unto
 which there had been a great resort for many ages; and
 Bethel was, in every one's opinion, a holy place, that which
 Jacob had consecrated after he had been vouchsafed the

(s) 1 Kings xiv. 16. (t) 2 Kings xvii. 21. (u) 1 Kings
 iv. 9. (x) Judg xvii.

vision of the ladder, and where God had so frequently appeared to him, that he thought he had reason to call it (y) *the gate of heaven*. A. M. 3001, &c. Ant. Chris. 1003, &c.

Jeroboam, no question, was not insensible of the advantage his rival enjoyed, in having the temple in his possession; and might many times wish that he had been able to have built one that might have stood in competition with it; but this was impossible. Seven years and an half had Solomon been in completing the temple at Jerusalem, notwithstanding the multitude of hands that he employed, and the vast preparations of money and materials that his father had left him. To build one less magnificent, had been inglorious to Jeroboam; and to build one any ways adequate, was more than he could hope to see finished in his days. The people were grown weary of such public expensive works. The tax had been heavy and burdensome to them. (z) *Thy father made our yoke grievous*, was the complaint they brought against Rehoboam. Upon this the whole revolt was founded. And therefore, in the present state of Jeroboam's affairs, a new temple was, of all projects, the most unpopular, and the likeliest to create a total defection; since it was running directly into his rival's error, and, in effect, declaring, that (a) his little finger should be found heavier than Solomon's loins had ever been. from 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

In the mean time, his subjects deserted apace; and, for want of a place of religious worship to resort to, were returning to Jerusalem, and to their allegiance to the house of David at once. Something therefore was necessary to be done, in order to remedy this growing evil; and, because Jeroboam readily foresaw, that, to support himself in his usurpation, he might possibly want the assistance of the Egyptians, the best policy that at present occurred to his thoughts, was, to do a courtesy to them, in setting up a form of worship much like theirs, and, at the same time, to gratify his own subjects in the choice of such places of worship as had been famous in the days of old, and whose reputed sacredness, * as well as proximity, might commute for the want of a temple.

Gezer,

(y) Gen. xxviii. 17.
ver. 10.

(z) 1 Kings xii. 4.

(a) Ibid.

* The Speech which Josephus makes for Jeroboam upon this occasion, is to this purpose. "I need not tell you, my coun-

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end.
of 2 Chron.
The history
of Gezer,
and why
Pharaoh
took it.

Gezer, we own, lay at a considerable distance from Egypt, which, since the time of Sesostris, had seldom extended its conquests into foreign lands; and therefore, to account for its conduct here, we must observe, that Gezer was so ancient a town in Canaan, that when Joshua (*b*) conquered it, it had a king of no small note; that in the division of the land, (*c*) it fell to the tribe of Ephraim, was bordering upon the northern part of the country of the Philistines, and not far from the Mediterranean sea; that it was one of the eight and forty cities, which (together with their suburbs) were given to the Levites; an inland town, but at no great distance from the sea-port of Joppa; that when the Ephraimites took possession of it, (*d*) they suffered the Canaanites to cohabit with them, who gave them no small disturbance, and, towards the latter end of David's reign, expelled them thence; that when Solomon came to the throne, he applied himself chiefly to the building of the temple, nor thought it worth while to disturb the peace of his reign for the recovery of a few revolted cities; that when a match was proposed between Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter, Pharaoh thought he could not do a more acceptable service, or shew the benefit of his alliance better, than in taking Gezer, and some adjacent places; that, for this purpose, he set out with a large fleet of ships, landed at Joppa, besieged Gezer, and because it made an obstinate defence, (*e*) burnt it to the ground, and slew all the Canaanites that were in it; but that not long after he began to rebuild it; and when his daughter was espoused to Solomon, gave him this, and

"trymen, that God is every where, and not confined to any certain place, but wherever we are, he hears our prayers and
"accepts our worship, in one place as well as another; and
"therefore I am not at all for your going up to Jerusalem at
"this time, to a people that hate you. It is a long tedious
"journey, and all this only for the sake of religion. He who
"built that temple was but a man, as every one here is, and
"the golden calves that I have provided for you, the one in
"Bethel, and the other in Dan, are consecrated, as well as the
"temple, and brought so much nearer to you, on purpose for
"the convenience of your worship, where you may pay your
"duty to God, in such a manner as best pleases you, &c.;"
Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 3.

(*b*) Josh. x. 33. (*c*) Ibid. xvi. 5. (*d*) Ibid. xxi. 20, 21.
(*e*) 1 Kings ix. 16.

some

some other places he had taken along with it, as part of her portion; for it is a mistaken notion, that princes daughters had no portion in those days.

Among the Jews indeed, the custom was for the men to give the dower, or to make some present to the parents, for the favour of having their daughter in marriage. But this custom prevailed only among the inferior sort: Ladies of the first distinction were, in all nations, wont to bring their husbands fortunes proportionate to their quality: For Saul, we read, declared that the man who should slay Goliath should not only have his daughter in marriage, but, together with her, plenty of riches and other valuable emoluments. Antiochus the Great promised to settle upon his, the kingdoms of Judea and Samaria, as a dower to Ptolemy king of Egypt; and (to name no more) Agamemnon, in times of an elder date, though not so great affluence, offered no less than * seven good towns with his, without any reserved rent, or other deduction from her husband. So that Pharaoh did no more than conform to the practice of other great princes, in endowing his daughter with the places he had taken from the Philistines, in all probability, for that very purpose.

How he came to swerve so soon from this alliance, as to give protection and countenance to his son-in-law's avowed enemies, need be no wonder at all to him who considers by what various springs kingdoms are governed; how the interest of nations shifts about, according to the different situation of their affairs, and of how little weight and validity all leagues and treaties are, when once national interest comes to be thrown into the counterbalance.

But this is not all. The Pharaoh who received Jeroboam in his exile, in all probability, was not the king

A. M.
3001, etc.
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Why Pharaoh entertained Jeroboam.

* His words in Homer are these:

Ἐὶ δὲ καὶ Ἀργεὺς ἰκοίμεθ' Ἀχαιῶν, ἔδαρ ἄρ' ἔρξης
Γαμβρὸς κ' ἐν μοι ἔστι, τίς τε δὲ μιν ἴσον ὀρέσῃ
Ὅς μοι τηγυγίης τρέφεται θαλίῃ ἐνὶ πολλῇ.
Τρεῖς δὲ μοι εἰσι, θυγάτρεις ἐνὶ μεγάρῳ ἐνπλήγῃ,
Τάαν, ἣν κ' ἐβίλησι φίλῃν ἀνέκδνον ἄγροισιν
Πρὸς οἶκον Πηλῆος· ἐγὰρ δ' ἐπιμείλεια δόσω
Πολλὰ μάλ', ὅσσ' ἔπαυτις ἐξέπεδωκε θυγατρὶ
Ἐπὶ δὲ οἱ δόσω ἐδναϊόμενα πολέεσσι, &c.

Iliad ix. lin. 141.

whose

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Chriſt.
2003, &c.
from
2 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

whose daughter Solomon had married, but a prince of another line, and of different views. The woman whom Solomon married, was one of the dynasty of the Diospolites, whose ancestors had lived at Thebes; but in the year that Solomon finished the temple, (f) there happened a revolution in Egypt, wherein this dynasty, or race of kings, lost the throne, and was succeeded by that of the Taanites, of whom Semendis, the father of Shishak, was the first king. These kept their court at Zoan, an ancient town, not far from the borders of Canaan, and therefore very convenient for the reception of any refugees that should come from thence. For as it was the interest of the former kings of Egypt to keep up a good understanding with the house of David; so now it became equally the interest of the present race to make use of all instruments to embarrass them, lest, by joining with the deposed family, that might at any time, occasion another revolution in Egypt. And this, by the by, suggests the reason (whereof the Scripture is silent) why Shishak invaded the kingdom of Judah with a vast army, but never pretended to annoy Israel; namely, because he thought it adviseable to disable Rehoboam from assisting the deposed family in Egypt, but to encourage Jeroboam, who being an usurper himself, was questionless a friend and ally to those princes that were in the like circumstances.

Who the Queen of Sheba was, and in what climate the country from whence she came to visit Solomon lay, are points wherein the learned are not so well agreed: But whether her name was Nicaule, Candace, Marqueda, or Balkis, (for different authors give her these several names), it matters not much, if we can but find out what this Sheba was, whereof she is said to have been queen.

The kingdom of Sheba, where situated.

Josephus, and, from his authority, many more are of opinion, that Sheba was the ancient name of Meroë, an island, or rather peninsula in Egypt, before Cambyfes, in compliment to his sister, (other historians call her his mother) gave it her name. He tells us likewise, that she was queen both of Egypt and Ethiopia; and * the Ethiopians

(f) Bedford's Scripture-chronology, lib. vi. c. 2.

* The Ethiopians, who held that this queen of Sheba was of their country, tell us, that she returned big with child of a boy which she had by Solomon; that when this child was of age, she sent him to Solomon, who brought him up as his own son; that
in

prians indeed have a tradition, that upon her return, she had a son by Solomon, whose posterity reigned there many years, and, to this very day, they have preserved a continual list of their names and successors.

There are these exceptions however to be made to the opinion of the Jewish historian, viz. that whereas he cites Herodotus, as speaking of his queen Nicaule, Herodotus makes mention of none but only Niconis, queen of Egypt; nor does he say one syllable of her pretended journey to Jerusalem. Whereas he says of this Nicaule, that she was queen of Egypt and Ethiopia both; the sacred history is plain, that in the time of Solomon there reigned in Egypt that Pharaoh, whose daughter he married, and, in his son Rehoboam's time, Shishak. Whereas he tells us, that the ancient name of Meroë, before the time of Cambyfes, was Sheba; for this he seems to want authority, since (g) Diodorus, and other Historians, represent this city as built new from the ground, and not repaired by Cambyfes.

The more probable opinion therefore is, that this queen of Sheba came from a country so named, which lay not in Ethiopia nor Africa, but in the southern part of Arabia Felix; because it is generally allowed, that the Sabeans lived in Arabia, and that their country was usually called by the Orientalists *the kingdom of the South*, in allusion to

in his education, he took care to provide the ablest masters for him, and then sent him back to his mother, whom he succeeded in the kingdom; that the kings of Ethiopia were descended from Solomon by this young prince, whom they call *Meilic*, or *Menilebec*; and that of his family there were four and twenty emperors, down to Basilides, who reigned about the middle of the seventeenth age. *Vid.* Ludolph's Hist. of Ethiopia. The Arabians, who, on the other hand, pretend to the honour of having this woman for their queen, tell us, that her name was Balkis, the daughter of Hadhad son of Scharhabil, the twentieth king of Jemen, or Arabia Felix, and that she reigned in the city of Mareb, the capital of the province of Sheba. Their histories are full of fabulous stories concerning her journey to Solomon's court, and her marriage with him; but more particularly concerning the bird *Hudhud*, (in English a *lapwing*), which Solomon made use of to send into Arabia upon occasion, and to bring him dispatches from thence; *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Nicaule*.

(g) Lib. 1. et Luc. Ampel. de Cambyse.

which

A. M.
3001, etc.
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1003, &c.
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which, our Saviour styles this princess (*b*) *the queen of the South*; because their country borders upon the southern ocean, beyond which the ancients knew no farther land; and therefore our Saviour (according to the common mode of speaking) says of this princess, that *she came from the utmost parts of the earth*; because, in this country, * women were known to govern as well as men; because the common produce of it was gold, silver, spices, and precious stones; the very presents which this princess made Solomon; and, (if any popular traditions may be credited) (*i*) because the Arabians talk of their queen Balkis, who went to visit Solomon, and shew travellers the place of her nativity to this very day.

Who the
queen was,
and why
she visited
Solomon.

Now if this princess came from Arabia, there is reason to believe that she was originally descended from Abraham, by his wife Keturah, one of whose sons (*k*) begat Sheba, who was the first planter of this country; and consequently that she might have some knowledge of revealed religion, by tradition at least, from her pious ancestors. To this purpose the Scripture seems to intimate, that the design of her visit to Solomon was, not so much to gratify her curiosity, as to inform her understanding in matters relating to piety, and divine worship. It was Solomon's fame, (*l*) *concerning the name of the Lord*, i. e. concerning his knowledge of the Supreme Being, and the proper manner of worshipping him, that excited her to take so long a journey: And therefore, our Saviour says, that as she came so far to *hear his wisdom*, (his wisdom concerning what? Concerning the nature and worship of Almighty God), she would, at the day of judgment, *rise up against that generation which refused to listen to him*.

Now, if this was the end of this queen's visit to Solomon, who can say, but that she left her country to good purpose, since it was to *find (m) wisdom, and to get un-*

(*b*) Matth. xii. 42.

* It is generally supposed, that these words of Claudian relate to these people:

Medis, levibusque Sabæis
Imperat hic sexus, reginarumque sub armis
Barbariæ pars magna jacet——

Claud.

(*i*) Calmet's Commentary on 1 Kings x. 1. and his Dictionary, under the word *Sheba*. (*k*) Gen. xxv. 1, 3. (*l*) 1 Kings x. 1.

(*m*) Prov. iii. xiii.

derstanding,

derstanding, the merchandize of which is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gains thereof than fine gold; (n) the price of which is above rubies, (o) and all that can be desired is not to be compared to it? But even upon the supposition, that her errand was to acquire knowledge of an inferiour kind, or even to make trial of Solomon's sagacity; by proposing some enigmatical questions to him; yet, who knows not, that it was the practice in those days for persons of the first rank and figure in life to exercise their wits in this manner?

A. M.
3601, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1903, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

(p) Josephus, from some writers of the Phœnician history, tells us, that Solomon used frequently to send to his friend Hiram problems and riddles, upon the forfeiture of a great sum of money, if he could not expound them; and that one Abdemonus, a Tyrian, not only unriddled Solomon's difficulties, but sent back some new propositions of his own, which, if Solomon could not resolve, he was to incur the like forfeiture. Now the Scripture remarks of Solomon, that (q) *his wisdom excelled the wisdom of the east country*, and by the East Country some do understand the seat of the ancient Arabians, who, in the days of Pythagoras, were so renowned for their wisdom, that (r) that philosopher thought it worth his while to go and reside among them for some time. They were great masters of wit and ingenuity; and valued themselves upon their sagaciousness and dexterity, both in propounding and solving problems; and therefore no wonder that this Queen of Sheba, who (as Josephus informs us) was a woman of exquisite understanding herself, should fall in with the humour of the times, and carry with her some problems of her Arabian sages, on purpose to make a trial of Solomon's parts: Nor can we imagine, but that, in complaisance to so royal a visiter, as well as regard to his own reputation, Solomon would take care to answer her questions, and (as the Scripture expresses it) satisfy (s) *all her desire, whatsoever she asked*.

Without knowing the custom of the princes of the east, their pomp, and sumptuousness of living, one might be tempted to wonder, what possible use Solomon might make of this miliad of wives and concubines that he

Solomon's
great num-
ber of
wives kept
for state.

(n) Job. xxviii. 18. (o) Prov. viii. 11. (p) Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2. (q) 1 Kings iv. 30. (r) Porphy. apud Cyrill. lib. x. contrailian. (s) 1 Kings x. 13.

A. M.
3001, etc.
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had: But as he was between forty and fifty years old before he ran into this excess, we cannot but think, that he kept this multitude of women more for state than any other service. (t) Darius Candemmannus was wont to carry along with him in his camp, no less than three hundred and fifty concubines in time of war; nor was his queen at all offended at it, because these women used to reverence and adore her as if she had been a goddess. F. Le Compte, in his history of China, tells us, that the emperor there has a vast number of wives chosen out of the prime beauties of the country, many of which he never so much as saw in his whole life: And therefore, it is not improbable, that Solomon (as he found his riches increase) might enlarge his expences, and endeavour to surpass all the princes of his time in this, as well as all other kinds of pomp, and magnificence.

How far he
was per-
verted by
them.

A man of Solomon's great wisdom, one would think, should have converted those women that were about him to the true religion, rather than have suffered himself to be perverted by them to a false one. The Scripture tells us indeed, that (u) *he went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and † Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites, and † Chemosh, the abomination of Moab*; but surely he could never be so far infatuated, as to prefer those idols before the God of Israel. These women, no doubt, as they had

(t) Athen. lib. xiii. c. 1. (u) 1 Kings xi. 5, 7.

† This God is the same with Moloch, which, both in Hebrew and Ethiopic, signifies, *a king*; but then there are various sentiments concerning the relation which this god had to the other Pagan deities. Some believe, that Moloch was Saturn, others Mercury, others Venus, and others again Mars or Mirtha. But F. Calmet, in his dissertation before his commentary upon Leviticus, has made it more than probable, that this god was the sun, who is called *the king of heaven*, as the moon may be said to be the queen thereof, for its make and manner of worship. Vide vol. 2. p. 460. in the notes.

† Chemosh, or Chamos, comes from a root, which, in Arabic, signifies, *to make haste*; and from hence some have imagined, that he is the same with the sun, whose motion is supposed to be so hasty and rapid; though some, from the Hebrew root, which signifies *contractatus*, or *huddled*, will have him the same with the Roman Priapus, who is called *Pater contractationum nocturnarum*; while others, from the near resemblance of the Hebrew *Chamos*, with the word *Comos*, have rather thought it to be Bacchus, the god of drunkenness: But in either acceptation it may be supposed to represent either Noah or Lot; *Jurieu Hist. des dogmes et cult. part. 4.*

got an ascendant over him, (x) might abate his zeal against idolatry, and prevail with him for a public toleration of their religion: They might obtain money of him for the making of their idols, the support of their priests, and expence of their sacrifices; nay, and perhaps might sometimes persuade him, in complaisance, to go with them to their worship, or to partake of their lewd and riotous feasts; but that they should ever be able to alter his notions concerning the true God, or prevail with him to believe, that the images they worshipped were informed with any kind of divinity, is a thing incredible.

In the course of this prevarication, however, he continued so long, that it is now become a famous question, Whether he be in a state of salvation or no? Those that maintain the negative, are apt to suggest, that though the Scripture gives us a particular account of his fall, yet it takes no notice of his recovery; that without the grace of God he could not repent, and yet his actions were such as justly deserved a forfeiture of that grace; that, had he repented, he would have pulled down the idolatrous temples which he had erected, whereas we find them standing many years after him; and therefore they conclude, that as he did not (y) *sorrow after a Godly sort* for his impieties, because in his whole behaviour (to the very last) they can discern no carefulness wrought in him, no clearing of himself, no indignation, no fear, no vehement desire, no zeal, no revenge, which the apostle has made the proper characteristics of a true repentance. The promise, however, which God makes to David concerning his son Solomon, may incline us to think favourably of his salvation: (z) *I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men, but my mercy shall not depart away from him.* And therefore we may presume, that towards the conclusion of his life he grew sensible of his transgressions, (a) though the sacred writer takes no notice of it, on purpose to leave a blot on his memory, and a frightful example of human weakness to all posterity; that the temples, which he had built to Heathen idols, he pulled down and demolished, (b) though they were afterwards raised again upon the same places, by other impious princes;

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
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to the end.
of 2 Chron.

And whether he was finally saved or no.

(x) Pool's Annotations. (y) 2 Cor. vii. 11. (z) 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15. (a) Patrick's Commentary. (b) Calmet's Differt. sur la salut. du Roy Solomon.

A. M. and that, after his fall, he wrote his book of Ecclesiastes
 3001, etc. as a monument of his repentance, and acknowledgment of
 Ant. Christ. his own apostacy, and a warning and admonition to all
 1003, etc. others, that, however they may think of (c) *doing whatever*
 from their eyes desired, of keeping nothing from them, and of with-
 1 Kings viii. holding their hearts from no joy; yet, in the event, they would
 to the end find (what his experience had taught him so late) that all
 of 2 Chron. *was vanity and vexation of spirit*; that there was no profit
 in any kind of wickedness under the sun, but (d) *that to*
fear God, and keep his commandments, was the whole duty of
man.

Why Ahijah rent his garment.

It is making a wrong judgment of things, to think, that the customs of ancient times, and of different countries, should agree with those of our own age and climate. We, indeed, when we have any thing to declare or relate, do it, for the most part, in express words; but the people of the east, especially those who took upon them the character of prophets, were fond of discovering their minds in † signs and emblematical actions; because they looked upon such representations more lively and affecting than any that proceeded from the mouth only could be.

When the prophet was sent to anoint Jehu to be King of Israel, the question which the rest of the captains put to him, (e) *Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?* sufficiently indicates their scorn and contempt of him: and, in like manner, Ahijah might have addressed himself to a man

(c) Ecclef. ii. 10. 11.

(d) Ibid. xii. 13.

† This is the first symbolical action that we meet with in any prophet; but, in after-ages, instances of this kind became more frequent. Thus Jeremiah *made himself bonds and yokes, and put them upon his neck*, to signify the near approaching captivity of Jerusalem, Jer. xxvii. 2. Isaiah, to denote the captivity of Egypt and Ethiopia, walked naked, *i. e.* without his upper garments on, and *bare-foot for three years, in the streets*, Is. xx. 2, 3. Ezekiel (to make the people sensible that they were to be carried away into a strange land) was ordered to make a breach in the wall of his house, and, through that, to remove his household-goods, *in the day-time, and in their sight*, Ezek. xii. 3, 4. The false prophet Zedekiah made himself a pair of iron horns, and said to Ahab, *With these shalt thou push the Syrians*, 1 Kings xxii. 11. And the like practice continued under the New Testament likewise; for Agabus having bound his hands and feet with St. Paul's girdle, told the company, that *so should the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man unto whom it belonged*, Acts xxi. 11.

(e) 2 Kings ix. 11.

of Jeroboam's haughty spirit to small purpose, had he not, by some previous action, drawn his observation, and made him attentive to the message he was going to deliver. Now, if any such symbolical act was necessary at this time, the tearing of his garment was more proper than any, because, in the case of Saul, Samuel had applied it to denote the alienation of his kingdom: (f) *the Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou*: And if renting the garment was no insignificant symbol upon this occasion, the newer the garment was, the more it would declare, that what the prophet did was by a divine command, and upon mature deliberation.

A. M.
3001, etc.
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This may, in some measure, suffice to rescue Ahijah from the imputation of madness, in tearing his garment to pieces. And (to come now, in the least place, to the case of the other prophet who came from Judah to denounce judgments against the altar of Bethel, and was slain in his return, for disobeying the divine injunction) this we may think was a small offence, that hardly deserved so severe a fate; but then we should do well to consider, that, (g) whenever God, in an extraordinary manner, discovers his will to a prophet, he always makes such a sensible impression upon his mind, that he cannot but perceive himself actuated by a divine spirit; and, consequently, cannot but be assured of the evidence of his own revelation. This evidence the prophet that was sent to Bethel had; for as he was able, by the power that was given him, to work miracles, he could not but be sensible of his divine mission, and that the particular injunction, of *his not eating or drinking in the town of Bethel*, was as much the will of God as any other part of his commission.

The prophet from
Judah, his
offence re-
lated.

Now, the design of God, in this prohibition, was, to express his abhorrence of that idolatrous place; and therefore the other pretended revelation of the † old prophet, who

(f) 1 Sam. xv. 28.

(g) Stillingfleet's Orig. sacræ.

† The learned are divided in their sentiments concerning this prophet at Bethel. Some will needs have him to have been a false prophet, highly in esteem with King Jeroboam, because he prophesied to him soft things, and such as would humour him in his wickedness. To this purpose they tell us, that going to visit the king one day, and finding him in a deep concern upon account of the menaces and reproaches which the man of God

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
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who lived therein, was justly to be suspected, not only because it was repugnant to God's main design, but because it came from a person who had given no great testimony of his sincerity, in chusing to live in a place notoriously infected with idolatry, and yet making no public remonstrances against it. The consideration of this one circumstance should have made the young prophet diffident of what the other told him, at least till he had shewn him some divine testimony to convince him; for it argued a great deal of levity, if not infidelity of his own revelation, to listen to that of another man, in contradiction to what he had abundant reason to believe was true.

The short of the matter is: The prophet from Judah had sufficient evidence of the truth of his own revelation; had sufficient cause to suspect some corrupt ends in the prophet that came to recal him; and had sufficient reason to expect an interposition of the same power that gave him the injunction, to repeal it: And therefore his crime was an easy credulity, or complying with an offer, (merely to gratify a petulant appetite), that he knew was repugnant to a divine command; and the lesson we are to learn from God's severity in this instance is,——Not to suffer our faith to be perverted by any suggestions that are made against a revelation that is of uncontested divine authority,

God from Judah had denounced against him, he undertook to persuade him, that that prophet was an impostor, and to elude the force of the miracle he had wrought, by telling him, that there was nothing extraordinary in his altar's falling down, considering that it was new-built, not thoroughly settled, loaded with sacrifices, and heated with fire. And as for the matter of his arm, that was occasioned only by his having overwrought himself in pulling the sacrifices along, and lifting them up upon the altar, which might make his hand numb for a while, but, upon a little rest, it came to itself again; and so, with plausible distinctions, and loose insinuations, he shuffled off the miracle, and made the king more obdurate in wickedness than ever. Others think more favourably of the old prophet, viz. that he was a true prophet of God, though (some say) a wicked one, not unlike the famous Balaam, who sacrificed every thing to his profit: Whilst others say, he was a weak one, who thought he might innocently employ an officious lie to bring the prophet of Judah back, who was under a prohibition indeed, but such an one, as (in his opinion) related only to the house of Jeroboam, and such others as were of an idolatrous religion; *Josephus's Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 3.*

but

but (b) if an angel from heaven (as the apostle puts the case) should preach any other gospel, than what we have received, to detest and denounce him accursed.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1003, etc.

Here, however, we may take occasion to admire the unsearchable secrets of the divine justice. Jeroboam revolts from his lawful sovereign; forsakes the worship of the true God; engages the people in gross idolatry, and is himself hardened with the menaces and miracles of the prophet that was sent to him. A false prophet deceives an innocent man with a lie, and draws him into an act of disobedience, contrary to his inclination; and yet this wicked Jeroboam, and this seducing prophet, go unpunished, while the other, who might mean no ill perhaps in turning back, is slain by a lion, and his body deprived of the sepulture of his fathers. We must acknowledge indeed, that the depths of the judgments of God are an abyss that our understandings cannot fathom: But nothing certainly can be a more sensible proof of the truth of another life, and of the eternal recompences or punishments that attend it, than to see the righteous so rigorously treated here for very slight offences: Moses excluded the land of promise (i) for a diffident thought; (k) Lot's wife changed into a statue of salt for her looking back; and (l) David, for a vain curiosity, punished with the death of no less than seventy thousand of his subjects: And if God be thus severe to his own servants; (m) if judgment thus begins at the house of God, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? As sentence against every evil man therefore is not speedily executed, this is our proof, this is our assurance, that (n) God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

from
1 Kings. viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.
And why
the lying
prophet
went unpunished.

DISSERTATION I.

Of Solomon's Riches, and his Trade to Ophir.

HE who only looks into the map, and there observes, in how small a compass the land of Canaan is comprised, may be apt to think, that the kings of that country were petty princes, ruling over an indigent obscure people, unable to bear any great expence, and incapable of making

The riches
which David left Solomon,

(b) Gal. i. 8, 9. (i) Num. xx. 11, 12. (k) Gen. xix. 26. (l) 2 Sam. xxiv. 15. (m) 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. (n) Eccles. xii. 14.

A. M.
3004, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii
to the end
of 2 Chron.

any considerable figure, except now and then, at the head of their armies : But he will soon perceive his mistake when he comes to reflect on the immense riches which David left his son Solomon ; on the vast expence of Solomon's magnificent living ; and on the several branches of his revenue, which enabled him to sustain that expence.

The Scripture informs us, that out of the revenues of the crown, David left Solomon, merely for the purpose of building the temple, (o) *an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver* ; out of his privy purse, (p) *three thousand talents of gold, and seven thousand talents of silver* ; and out of the benevolence of the princes, (q) *five thousand talents, and ten thousand drachms of gold, and ten thousand talents of silver*. Now, since it is generally agreed, that a talent of silver was equivalent to three hundred forty-two pounds three shillings and nine pence ; and a talent of gold amounted to no less than five thousand four hundred and twenty-five pounds sterling, what an immense sum must all these talents of gold and silver amount to ? Some of the best authors of weights and measures have computed, that if all the walls, pavements, lining, and covering of the temple had been made of massy gold, (even with the wages of the workmen and vessels belonging to it), they would not have come up to the value here specified ; and therefore, upon this supposition, they have advanced a notion, that the Hebrews had two kinds of talents ; a larger, which was called *the talent of the sanctuary*, and a smaller, which was the common talent, and one half less than the other, by which all such exorbitant sums (as they say) ought to be reckoned. But what grounds they have for this distinction we cannot perceive, (r) since it no where appears, either in the Scriptures, or in any other history, that the Jews (especially before the captivity of Babylon) had any more talents than one ; and that their talent, whether of silver or gold, arose to a sum tantamount to what we have stated it at, there are several instances, in the Old Testament, that may convince us.

To this purpose we may observe, that when Amaziah, king of Judah, hired an hundred thousand men out of Israel, to fight against the Edomites, he gave no more than

(o) 1 Chron. xxii. 14. (p) Ibid. xxix. 4. (q) Ibid. xxix. 7. (r) Calmet's Dissert. sur les richesses que David laissa à Solomon.

(s) an hundred talents of silver for them, which would have been but a very trifling price indeed, had the talent here been of less value than three thousand shekels: That when Omri, King of Israel, bought the mountain whereon was built the city of Samaria, he paid for it no more than (t) two talents of silver; and yet these two talents were ten thousand nine hundred and fifty pounds, a proper sum for such a purchase: That when Sennacherib king of Assyria had obliged Hezekiah to pay him (u) three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold, that good king exhausted, not only his own treasure, and the treasure of the house of the Lord, but was forced likewise to cut the gold off from the doors and pillars of the temple. And (to name no more) that when Pharaoh Nechoch (x) *put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold*, Jehoiakim was necessitated to levy a tax extraordinary upon all his subjects, that every one might contribute according to his power: But neither of these remarks (*viz.* that these two kings were thus straitened about the payment) would the sacred historian have made, had the talent, in his days, been of considerably less value (y) than Moses is known to rate at it. So that, upon the whole, we may conclude, that the Hebrew talent continued always the same, and amounted to a much greater sum than those who are for debasing its value are willing to allow.

“ But, if the talent must be reckoned at so high a rate, how can we imagine, that David, who had no estate from his family, and whose dominions were far from being extensive, could ever be able to amass such an immense quantity of wealth :” Now, in answer to this, we should do well to consider, that, even before the death of Saul, David was at the head of some brave troops, with whom he used to make inroads into the enemies country, and frequently bring from thence large booty; that, after Saul’s death, he reigned forty years in all, and, in that space, made it his business to heap up riches, especially when he came to understand, that God had appointed his son and successor to build him a temple; that, in the time of his reign, he had wars with the Syrians, the Philistines, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and several other nations, from whom he returned always victorious, and always la-

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(s) 2 Chron. xxv. 6. (t) 1 Kings xvi. 24. (u) 2 Kings xviii. 15. (x) Ibid. xxiii. 33. (y) Exod. xxxviii. 25, 26.

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Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
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den with their treasures, and † rich spoils; that, by this means, he enlarged his dominions, as far as (z) the promise made to Abraham extends, even from the river Euphrates to the Mediterranean sea, on the one side, and to the Nile on the other; that the countries which he subdued, and made tributary to him, such as Arabia, Phœnicia, Mesopotamia, Idumæa, &c. were exceedingly rich, and productive of several mines of gold and other metals; and that the tributes which were wont to be exacted upon such occasions, were either annual imposts, or vast sums of money at once: If we consider, I say, the spoils which he took from conquered nations, and the tribute which he raised from such as were submitted to his empire, we shall have no cause to wonder at his leaving such immense treasures to his son.

But, besides these revenues from abroad, he had a large income from the taxes which his own subjects annually paid him, and the improvements he made of his own estates; which, in those days, were accounted, not only lawful and allowable, but even honourable and commendable in princes, as well as others. The sacred history has preserved (a) the names of the officers whom he employed in this capacity; and, from the different provinces wherein they acted, we may, in some measure, form a judgment of the largeness of this branch of his income. He had officers set over the labourers, who were to till his grounds: Officers to take care of the dressing of his vines, olive, and fig-trees: Officers to inspect the gathering of his fruits, and the management of his wine and Oil-cellars: officers to look to the feeding of his camels and asses, his herds of cattle,

† Besides the personal ornaments worn by those who went to battle in the eastern nations, it was customary to adorn their weapons and utensils of war with the richest metals. We learn from the history of David, that the Syrians, whom he subdued and slew in vast multitudes, wore shields of gold; and therefore we need not doubt, but that their quivers, the handles of their swords, &c. were of the same metal. He was victorious in about twenty battles over the richest enemies in the world: And therefore their personal spoils, rich arms, military chests, and gods of gold and silver, (always carried to battle with them), could not but amount to an immense sum; and, in all probability, the spoils of their cities and countries to a much greater; *The History of the life of king David.*

(z) Gen. xv. 7. (a) 1 Chron. xxvii. 26, &c.

and

and flocks of sheep; and officers who were to attend to the selling and exportation of all these. For David, we must know, had the command of the Mediterranean sea, and had established a commerce with the Phœnicians, Egyptians, Syrians, Philistines, and other nations, who took off his camels, asses, oxen, sheep, wine, corn, oil, fruits, and other commodities, in large quantities, and at very advantageous prices: All which, being put together, will make the amount of what David left his son no less than what the sacred writer has recorded.

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(b) And indeed, considering the vast expences Solomon was at in his chariots, in his horses, in his camels, in his armies, in his shipping, in his buildings, in his furniture, in his servants, for his table, and for his women, (which came at length to no less than a thousand, and all to be maintained in the port of queens), we can hardly think, that a small revenue would ever have been sufficient to answer all these demands.

The Scripture indeed informs us, that Solomon's annual income was (c) *six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, besides what he had of the merchant-men, and of the traffic of spice-merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of all the governours of the country*: But these six hundred threescore and six talents of gold (d) are thought, by most interpreters, to be no more than what arose from the tribute which he imposed upon conquered nations: Over and above which he had a yearly tax paid by his own subjects; duties upon the import or export of all merchandize; mines of gold and silver, and other metals; the voluntary presents of other princes; and a trade to Ophir and Tarshish, which brought him in riches inestimable.

How Solomon improved what his father left him.

These were two branches of profit which his father had not, at least not in the same extent. Of the former it is said, that (e) *every man that came to hear Solomon's wisdom, brought his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, and horses, and mules*, and continued to do the same every year; and of the latter, that he sent (f) *vessels to Ophir, which, in one voyage, brought him four hundred and fifty talents of gold, together*

(b) Calmet's Dissert. sur les richesses que David laissa à Solomon. (c) 1 Kings x. 14, 15. (d) Calmet, Ibid. (e) 1 Kings x. 24. (f) 2 Chron. ix. 10, 21, 22.

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The land of
Ophir diffi-
cult to find
out.

with *almug-trees*, and *precious stones*; and to Tarshish like-
wise, *which brought gold, and silver, and ivory, and apes,*
and *peacocks*; and as, by this means, he came to surpass
all the kings of the earth for riches, it may be worth our
while to inquire a little, where the places, which produced
such plenty of wealth, were in ancient times situated, and
both how, and by whom, a trade so very advantageous
might probably be carried on.

Amidst the vast variety of opinions concerning the situa-
tion of these two famous places, Ophir and Tarshish, (g)
the learned Grotius has suggested a good expedient, one
would think, how to find them out; namely, by consider-
ing what commodities were brought from thence, and then
inquiring of merchants, who have been in the remoter
parts of the world, where not only gold and precious
stones, but ivory likewise, and almug-trees, and whatever
else we read of, was brought from thence, is now to be
found. But this expedient will not do; not only because
the seats of traffic are frequently changing, and any coun-
try may, in time, be exhausted of the commodities it once
abounded with; but because it is no easy matter to tell (by
the imperfect description we have of them) of what distinct
species some of these commodities were. (h) The almug-
tree, for instance, has been a puzzle to most interpreters;
nor are they as yet agreed, whether it was the coral, ebo-
ny, Brazil, pine, or citron-wood; nay, some will have it
to have been no particular tree at all, but only a general
name for any wood whatever, that was excellent in its
kind: And how then can those commodities, that are of
so indefinite a signification, be any characteristic to the si-
tuation of any country?

Nor is there much more certainty to be gathered from
the names of the places we are in quest of; for, though it
be allowed, that Ophir was the country which at first was
peopled by Ophir, one of Joktan's sons, who are said (i)
to have inhabited the country from Mesha to Sephar, a
mountain in the east; yet, where Mesha and Sephar are to
be placed, we know no more than we do where Ophir lies.
And, in-like manner, though Tarshish may be supposed
by some, to be a town or country, not far distant from
Ophir, yet others will have it to be no proper name at all,

(g) Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings. (h) Calmet and
Le Clerc's Commentaries. (i) Gen. x. 30.

but,

but, by ships of Tarshish, or from Tarshish, understand no more than vessels able to bear a long voyage, *i. e.* large merchant-ships, in opposition to small craft, intended for home-trade in navigable rivers. So incompetent are the marks whereby we may descry the true situation of these unknown places ! And therefore we can expect no other, but that the conjectures of learned men about them should be widely distant.

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In relation to the land of Ophir, which is more particularly under our inquiry, Josephus (and from him many others) places it in the Indies, in a country which he calls *the golden coast*, not unlikely the Chersonesus Aurea, known now by the name of *Malacca*, and is a peninsula opposite to Sumatra. The learned Bochart contends hard for the isle Taphrobane, so famous among the ancients, which is now called *Ceylon*, and lies in the kingdom of Malabar, because this place (as he tells us) 'abounds with gold, ivory, and precious stones.' Arias Montanus will needs remove it into Armenia ; and, when Christopher Columbus at first discovered the island Hispaniola in 1492, he used to make his boast that he had found the Ophir of Solomon, because he perceived deep caverns in the earth, from whence he supposed that prince might have dug his gold. F. Calmet is no less singular in his opinion : He places Ophir somewhere in Armenia, not far from the sources of the Tygris and Euphrates ; (k) and to obviate the objection of the country's not bordering on the sea, and not being at distance enough for a three years voyage, he supposes, that Solomon's fleet made a trading voyage of it ; that in no one place it met with all the commodities it brought home ; but, on the coast of Ethiopia, took in apes, ebony, and parrots ; in Arabia, ivory and spices ; and at Ophir, (or the place of traffic where the people of Ophir resorted), gold : And though this Ophir might be no maritime country, yet this hinders not, says he, why the gold which it produced might not be brought by land-carriage to some part of the Tygris or Euphrates, which, at that time, were a great way navigable. Grotius, as well as Calmet, is of opinion, that Solomon did not send his fleet to any part, either of the East or West Indies, but only to a part of Arabia, (by Arabian called *Aphar*, by Pliny, *Saphar*, and by Ptolemy, *Sapphera*), situated on the main ocean ; and that the Indians brought down their merchandizes thither, to be bought by

Different
opinions
concerning
it.

(k) Diff. sur le Pays d' Ophir.

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Solomon's factors, and shipped on board his fleet. And (to name no more) (*l*) Huetius, in his dissertation upon the subject, endeavours to persuade us, that Ophir lay upon the east coast of Afric, and more particularly, was that small country which is called *Sophala*; that Solomon's fleet went out of the Red Sea, and, from the harbour of Ezion-Geber, entered into the Mediterranean, by a canal of communication which joined the two seas; and that, having doubled the Cape of Guadarfay, and coasted along the African shore, it came at length to *Sophala*, and there met with plenty of all the merchandize and curiosities that the sacred history specifies.

Which of these conjectures (for conjectures they are all) make the nearest approaches to truth, it is hard to determine; only we may adventure to say, (*m*) that, if any part of Arabia did furnish the world, in those days, with the best gold, and in the greatest quantity, (as some good authors seem to say), they who would have the Ophir of the Holy Scriptures to be there situated, seem, of all others, to have the best foundation for their conjecture; especially considering that the use of the compass not being then known, the way of navigation was, in those days, by coasting, which would carry a ship into Afric much better than either into the East or West Indies.

His trade
how carried
on.

Before the reign of King David, (to inquire a little into this history of the Ophir-trade among the Hebrews), the Hebrews did not much apply themselves to maritime affairs. From the time of Joshua they had been almost perpetually engaged in wars, and therefore had no leisure or opportunity to think of navigation. The Tyrians and Phœnicians were then in possession of all the commerce of the Mediterranean; and, on the main ocean, the Hebrews had not the least footing until David made a conquest of Idumea, and thereby became master of two sea-port towns on the Red Sea, Elah, and Ezion-geber; and, seeing the advantage that might be made of the situation of these two places, wisely took the benefit of it, and there began this traffic.

After the death of his father, Solomon continued the trade to Ophir from these two ports, whither himself went in person; and having ordered more ships to be built, and the harbours to be repaired and fortified, he settled every

(*l*) Calmet's Dictionary, under the word *Ophir*. (*m*) Prideaux's Connection, part 1. lib. i.

thing

thing else that might tend to the effectual carrying on of this traffic, not only to Ophir, but to all other parts to which the sea whereon those ports lay opened him a passage. But his chief care was to plant in these two towns such inhabitants as were best qualified to carry on his design; for which reason he brought thither, from the sea-coasts of Palestine, as many sailors as he could get, but especially of the Tyrians, with whom his good friend and ally King Hiram supplied him in great numbers: So that in a short time he drew to these two ports, and from thence to Jerusalem, all the trade of Africa, Arabia, Persia, and India, which was the chief fountain of the immense riches for which his reign was so renowned.

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After the division of the kingdom, the kings of Judah, who kept possession of these ports in Idumea, still carried on the trade, especially from Ezion-geber, which they chiefly made use of until the time of Jehosaphat; who having prepared a fleet to go to Ophir, in conjunction with Ahaziah King of Israel, had the misfortune to have them destroyed and dashed to pieces against a ridge of rocks which lay at the mouth of the harbour, before they could get to sea, which gave him such a distaste against the place, that, from thenceforward, the station of his ships was at Elah, for from thence we read of his setting out a fleet next year for Ophir.

(n) When Jehoram succeeded his father Jehosaphat, God, for the punishment of his exceeding great wickedness, suffered the Idumeans to revolt from him; who, having expelled his viceroy, chose them a king of their own, and, under his conduct, regaining their ancient liberty, they soon recovered the two ports of Elah and Ezion-geber: But even while they had them, there was an interruption in the Ophir trade, until Uzziah, King of Judah, having retaken Elah, in the beginning of his reign, fortified it anew, peopled it with his own subjects, and restored the old traffic to Ophir, which continued all along until the wicked reign of Ahaz.

In the reign of Ahaz, Rezin, King of Damascus, being assisted by Pekah, King of Israel, took Elah by surprize; and having driven out the Jews that were settled there, put Syrians in their place, and was thinking of carrying on this trade, which the Kings of Judah had been so enriched by,

A. M. 3001, etc. Ant. Christ. 1003, &c. from 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron. to his own advantage; when, the very next year, Tiglath-Pileser, King of Assyria, having by the procurement of Ahaz, invaded Damascus, and conquered Rezin, took possession of Elah, and reserved the property of trade to himself: So that the Jews, from thenceforward, had never any portion in it, which proved a great diminution of their wealth.

How the Assyrians managed this traffic, while it continued in their hands, or where they fixed their principal mart for it, we are nowhere told. In process of time, we find it wholly ingrossed by the Tyrians, who, from the same port of Elah, by way of a (o) town on the confines of Egypt and Palestine, made it all centre in Tyre, and from thence furnished all the western part of the world with the wares of Persia, India, Africa, and Arabia, to the great enriching of themselves, as long as the Persian empire subsisted, under the favour and protection of whose kings they enjoyed the full possession of this trade. (p) But when the Ptolemies prevailed in Egypt, by building several ports on the Egyptian or western side of the Red Sea, (for Elah and Ezion-geber lay on the eastern), and, by sending from thence fleets to all those countries where the Tyrians traded from Elah, they soon drew all this trade into their kingdom, and there fixed the chief mart of it at Alexandria, where it continued for a great many ages, until a way was found out, (q) about two centuries and an half ago, of sailing to those parts by the way of the Cape of Good Hope; after which, the Portuguese, for some time, managed this trade; but now the greatest share of it is fallen into the hands of the English and Dutch.

(o) The town's name was *Rhinocorura*, Strabo lib. 16.

(p) Prideaux, *ibid.* (q) This happened *anno Dom.* 1497.

C H A P. II.

From the Reign of Jehosaphat, to the Siege of Samaria.

THE HISTORY.

Jehosaphat's good and happy reign. **A**FTER the death of Aza, Jehosaphat his son, when five and thirty years of age, succeeded him in the kingdom of Judah, and, in all acts of piety, as well as the

the reformation of religion, imitated, if not excelled, † the former part of his father's reign. At his first accession to the throne, he expressed his zeal for God's service, in the extirpation of those Sodomites, and the destruction of those idolatrous || high places and groves which remained in his father's reign; and perceiving that the people were grossly ignorant of the law, after he had fortified his frontier towns, and put his kingdom in a good posture of defence), he sent itinerant priests and Levites through all his dominions, with letters to the princes, and heads of each family, to receive them kindly, and to encourage them in expounding the law, and instructing his subjects in the knowledge of their duty.

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3001, etc.
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† In 2 Chron. xvii. 3. mention is made of the first ways of his father David; but it may very well be questioned, whether the word *David* be not slipped in here by the fault of some transcriber, in the place of Afa, because in 1 Kings xxii. 43. as likewise in 2 Chron. xx. 32. Afa is named, and not David. Now it is very well known, that in the beginning of his reign, Afa was very religious, but fell from his piety towards the conclusion of it; and therefore the sacred historian, by observing that Jehosaphat followed his father in what he was in his first days, and not in his old age, might intend a just reflection upon Afa for his growing more negligent and remiss in the service of God, towards the decline of his life; *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Howell's History*, in the notes.

|| It is said of his father Afa likewise, that he removed the high places, together with the idols and the groves, which his father and mother had made, 1 Kings xv. 12. &c.; but we are to observe, (as we have noted before) that there were high places and groves of two sorts; some for the worship of the true God, which continued in Judah even under religious princes; and others for the worship of idols, which good kings took away, even though they left the other standing. The high places and groves of this latter kind, were those which Afa destroyed; but because towards the conclusion of his reign, when he grew more infirm in body, and more remiss in God's cause, some of his subjects (out of their vile attachment to idols) had made new ones, Jehosaphat, upon his accession to the throne, had occasion enough to begin a reformation in this particular, as well as many others; *Patrick's Commentary* on 1 Kings xviii. 30; and *Pool's Annotations* on 2 Chron. xvii. 6.

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By these means, he soon gained the hearts of his people, who, to support the dignity of his government, † brought him presents from every quarter, † and struck such terror into his enemies, that instead of invading his dominions, the Philistines came voluntarily, and paid him a tribute, which had been suspended for some years, and the Arabians (whose riches consisted in cattle) sent him always seven thousand seven hundred rams, and an equal number of he-goats, as an annual acknowledgment of their homage. For Jehoshaphat took care to make himself strong in arms, as well as wealth, having an army of above eleven hundred thousand men, besides those that were in garrisons, and such fortified places as he had well furnished with plenty of all military stores.

In short, Jehoshaphat was rich and happy, great and honourable, beloved by his subjects, and revered by his enemies; only there was this great blemish in his reign, that he † married his son Jehoram to Athaliah, daughter to Ahab, King of Israel, which both displeased God, and involved him and his family in sundry troubles: But of these hereafter.

Ahab's wicked reign.

This Ahab (as we said) was one of the wickedest princes, and the most abominable idolater, that ever sat on the throne

† It was customary for subjects to make oblations to their princes, especially at the commencement of their reigns. It is said of some disaffected people, that they brought Saul no presents, even though he had been recognised as king, 1 Sam. x. 27. But by the presents here spoke of, we may not improperly understand the tribute and customs which his subjects were obliged to pay him; only it was thought proper to call them presents, or voluntary gifts, as a name of a less odious sound and import, than that of tributes; *Calmet's Commentary* on 2 Chron. xviii. 5

† His enemies could not but be sensible, that it was in vain to assault him, while he continued firm in his religion; for they must have observed, that the prosperity of all the kings of Judah depended on that, and that they never fell into the hands of their enemies, but when they had first fallen from God; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The only shadow of excuse that can be alleged in behalf of Jehoshaphat's marrying his son in this manner, might be a fond conceit, that in case Ahab should die without issue-male, he might have a chance to reunite the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah; but in this piece of worldly policy he found himself sadly disappointed; *Calmet's Commentary*.

of Israel: For he not only continued the worship of the calves which Jeroboam had set up, but having married Jezebel, the daughter of * Eth-baal, king of Tyre, to please this woman he introduced the idolatry paid to the * god Baal, built him a temple in Samaria, erected an altar, and * made a grove, where all kinds of impurities were

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* Eth-baal, or Ithobalus, (as he is called by profane writers), does equally signify *the strength of Baal*. In the catalogue of the kings of Tyre, he is said to be the eighth; and as both Tyre and Sidon were, from the beginning, subject to the same king, it is not improbable that their kings resided sometimes at one, and sometimes at the other city, and were therefore called the kings of Tyre or Sidon promiscuously. As the character of king and priest were frequently united in the same person, so is he supposed to have been the high-priest of Astarte or Ashtaroth, the goddess of the Sidonians; and for this reason perhaps his daughter was so violently attached to that kind of idolatry, that, when she came into power, she was for utterly extirpating all the priests and prophets of the Lord. The truth is, this queen was a monster in her kind; and therefore the name of Jezebel has passed into a proverb, to denote any cruel, impious, and imperious woman; *Calmet's Commentary* on 1 Kings xvi. 31.

* *Baal*, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies *Lord*, and, as Selden observes, was anciently the name of the true God, until the world grew wicked, and came to apply it to the sun: in after-ages, to other stars; and in process of time, to any of their kings whose memory was dear to them. The same author observes, that the Phœnician Belus, or Baal, was the same with the European Jupiter, and as Sidon was situated on the sea, their Baal was called by the Greeks *the Jupiter of the Sea*. But more of this you may see in the writings of that great man; *Selden, De diis Syriis*.

* The Jewish law was so far from permitting men to plant any such groves, that it enjoins all its professors to destroy them: *Ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire*, Deut. vii. 5; and therefore, though Josephus imputes the erection of these to the impiety of his wife Jezebel, who, (as he tells us, Jewish. Antiq. lib. viii. c. 7.) “ was a woman of a bold, enterprising humour, and of so impetuous and ungovernable a spirit, that she “ had the confidence to build a temple to Baal, the god of the “ Tyrians, to plant groves for superstition, of all sorts of trees, “ and appoint priests and false prophets expressly for that ido-

A. M.
3001, &c.
Gen. xxi.
1003, &c.
Gen. xxi.
Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

were committed, the more effectually to profelyte the vicious and debauched to a religion so agreeable to their lusts; and (as an instance of the daring impiety of this age) one Hiel, who lived at Bethel, the famous seat of all idolatry, † adventured to rebuild Jericho, in defiance of the curse which Joshua had pronounced (above four hundred and fifty years before) against any man that should attempt it. But the presumptuous wretch found to his cost, that Joshua's prediction was verified in him, when he saw his eldest son die, as soon as he had begun the work, the rest of his children drop off, as he continued it, and his youngest son taken away at last when he had completed it.

The prophet
Elijah foretells a
famine, which ac-
cordingly comes to
pass.

In the midst of this bold impiety, Israel, however, had the happiness to be blessed with an eminent prophet, Elijah, the † Tishbite, an inhabitant of Gilead, on the other side

“latrous service;” yet her husband was nevertheless culpable for giving her that indulgence.

† Jericho was one of the first places that Joshua took in the land of Canaan; and when he took it, he laid it under a *Cherem*, that it should never be rebuilt: But it is presumable, that as the sacred history was then very little read, Hiel might either be ignorant of this interdiction, or being a professed idolater himself, might probably, at the instigation of Jezebel, or to gain the favour of the court, do it in defiance of God, and to let the world see, that whatever was denounced in his name was of no significance at all, and for this reason met with his condign punishment; *Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

† There was a town on the other side of Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, and in the land of Gilead, where this prophet was born, or at least inhabited for some time. Since the Scripture makes no mention, either of the quality of his parents, the manner of his education, or his call to the prophetic office, some Jewish doctors have been of opinion, that he was an angel sent from heaven, in the midst of the general corruption of the world, to preserve the true worship of God. Others pretend, that he was a priest descended from the tribe of Aaron; that his father's name was Sabaca, and his birth altogether miraculous; Whilst others again will needs have it, that he was Phineas, the son of Aaron, who, after having lived a long while concealed, appeared again in the world under the name of Elijah. But where the Scripture is silent, all particulars of this kind are of small authority. This, however, may be said with safety of him, that he was one of the chief, if not the prince of the prophets of his age; a man of a great and elevated soul, of a generous

side of Jordan ; who being grieved to see such a general apostasy from the true religion, || prayed earnestly to God, that he would lay bare his arm, and shew some visible token of his displeasure against so wicked a people : And accordingly, in a short time, he was sent to Ahab to let him know, that God intended to bring a sore famine (occasioned by want of rain) upon the land, which should last for above three whole years.

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nerous and undaunted spirit, a zealous defender of the laws of God, and a just avenger of the violations of his honour ; *Calmet's Commentary.*

|| St. James's words are the these : — *Elias was a man subject to the like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly, that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months.* Our blessed Saviour makes mention of the like compass of time, Luke iv. 25. and yet neither of these are contradictory to what the sacred history tells us, viz. *That the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year,* 1 Kings xviii. 1. For we must remember, that as Egypt had usually no rain, but was watered by the river Nile ; so the land of Canaan had generally none, except twice a-year, which they called *the early and latter rain.* The former of these was in the month *Nisan*, which answers to our March ; and the other in the month *Marheshvan*, which answers to our October. Now, at the beginning of the drought, Ahab might very probably impute the want of rain to natural causes ; but when, after six months, neither *the former*, nor *the latter rain* fell in their season, he then began to be enraged at Elijah, as the cause of the national judgment, and forced him, at God's command, to save his life by flight : And from that time the three years in the historian are to be computed, though from the first notice which Elijah gave Ahab of this approaching calamity, to the expiration of it, were certainly three years and a half. This calamity is said to have been procured by Elijah's prayers : But we must not therefore imagine, that his prayers were spiteful and malicious, but necessary rather, and charitable to the offenders ; that by the sharp and long affliction which they produced, God's honour, and the truth of his word and threatnings (which was now universally contemned) might be vindicated ; and that the Israelites (whose present impunity hardened them in their idolatry) might hereby be awakened to see their wickedness, their dependence upon God, and the necessity of their returning to his religion and worship ; *Bedford's Scripture-chronology, lib. vi. c. 2. ; and Pool's Annotations.*

When

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When the drought had continued some time, and the divine threat began to operate, Elijah retired to the † brook Cherith, where he concealed himself for the space of a whole year, and was miraculously fed by the ravens, which brought him bread and flesh twice every day, and for his drink he had the water of the brook; but when the water of the brook began to fail, God directed him to go to † Zarephtha, a town belonging to the territories of Sidon, where he had appointed a widow woman to entertain him.

The manner of his living in exile, and his interview with Ahab.

The famine had spread itself over the country of Sidon, as well as the land of Israel; and therefore, when the prophet drew near the town, he met the widow to whom he was directed; and when he requested of her to give him a little water, and withal a morsel of bread, she solemnly protested to him, that she had but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruise, and was come out to pick up some sticks, wherewith to bake a cake * for her and

† The brook Cherith, and the valley through which it runs, are both very near the river Jordan; but whether on the east or west side of the river, it is not so well agreed. Eusebius, or at least St. Jerom, places it beyond Jordan, and so on the east side of it; but others generally agree, in placing it on the west side, because God, in sending away Elijah, says to him, *Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and bide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan*, 1 Kings xvii. 2. where the expression, *turn thee eastward*, seems to imply that Elijah was on the west side of Jordan; for had he been on the east side, then to have gone to the brook, which ran on that side into Jordan, would have been to have turned westward; *Wells's Geography of the Old Testament*, vol. iii.

† Zarephtha, or as it is called in the New Testament, Sarepta, was a town which lay between Tyre and Sidon, but somewhat nearer to the latter. Mr. Maundrell (in his journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem) observes, that it is the same with what is now called *Sarphan*, distant about three hour's travel from Sidon, in the way to Tyre. Whatever it was formerly, the same author tells us, that at present it consists of no more than a few houses, on the tops of the mountains, about half a mile from the sea; though there is reason to believe, that the principal part of the city stood below, in a space between the hills and the sea, because there are still ruins there to be seen of a very considerable extent; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*, part i. chap. v. sect. 2.

* Some of the Hebrew doctors (and herein they are follow-

and her son, which was to be the last meal they were ever like to eat. But the prophet, encouraging her to do as he bid her, gave her assurance, that her meal and her oil should not fail as long as the famine lasted; which accordingly proved true: For of that little store, she, her son, and the prophet, lived for the space of two years; and when, in this space her son fell sick, and died, Elijah, by his prayers, restored him to life again, which † gave the mother full conviction, that he was a person extraordinary sent from God.

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After he had lived in this obscurity for above two years, God commanded him to return to the land of Israel, and to present himself before Ahab; because, in a short time, he intended to send rain upon the earth. At this time the famine was so extreme about Samaria, that the king commanded * Obadiah, one of the officers of his household,

ed by some Christians) are of opinion, that this widow's son was the prophet Jonas; that after his restoration, his mother gave him to Elijah; that ever after he attended on the prophet, as long as he lived; and on a certain occasion was dispatched by him to Nineveh, as every one knows. But besides that these traditions are destitute of any real proof, Jonah was an Hebrew, as he himself declares, chap i. 9. and a native of Gath-hepher, as we read 2 Kings xiv. 25.; whereas this widow's son was a native of Zarephtha, a town belonging to the kingdom of Sidon, and by birth a stranger to the race of Israel; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† The woman had sufficient reason to believe that Elijah was a prophet, or person sent from God, when she saw the miraculous increase of the meal and oil; but upon his not curing her son when he lay sick, but rather suffering him to die, her faith began to droop; whereas, upon seeing him revive, her faith revived with him; and through the joy of having him restored to her again, she accounted this latter miracle much greater than the former; *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

* There are some Jewish doctors who think that this Obadiah was the same with him whose writings we have among the twelve minor prophets. They pretend that he was married to that woman of Shunem, where Elisha used to lodge; that he was a disciple of the prophet Elijah, and the last of the three captains whom King Ahaziah sent to apprehend him; and that, for this reason, he had compassion on him, though he destroyed the others that came before him with fire from heaven, 2 Kings i. 9. &c.; but all these things are pure apocrypha. Obadiah himself, in his discourse with Elijah sufficiently tells us who he was, viz. a person truly religious, who worshipped

A. M. 3001, etc. Ant. Chris. 1003, etc. from 1 Kings viii. to the end. of 2 Chron. household, and some others with him, to go all over the country in quest of some forage for the subsistence of his cattle, and to see that his orders were fully executed, himself went along with some of them. Obadiah, of all the king's domestics, was the most religious. He, in the time of Jezebel's † persecuting the prophets of the Lord, concealed an hundred of them, by fifty in a cave, and there sustained them with necessaries. When Elijah met him, Obadiah saluted him with great respect; but when the prophet required him to go, and acquaint the king that he was there, and desired to speak with him, Obadiah at first excused himself, upon apprehension that Elijah might vanish, and leave him the object of the king's indignation, who had taken such vast pains to find him out; but when the other assured him that he would not stir, he went and brought the king to him. The king, at the first interview, began to upbraid him with being the cause of the calamity that the nation suffered; but Elijah boldly returned the charge, and having taxed him with the worship of false gods, (which was the source of all their wo) he

worshipped God alone, and had a singular affection for his servants; enough, one would think, to have made Ahab discard, if not persecute him, had he not found him so highly useful in the management of his domestic affairs, as to connive at his not worshipping Baal, or the calves; especially as we read nothing of his going up to Jerusalem, which was a defect that God perhaps might think proper to dispense with; *Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

† Elijah, in his appeal to the people, tells them, *I, even I, only remain a prophet of the Lord*, 1 Kings xviii. 22.; and therefore we can hardly imagine, that all these hundred, whom Obadiah preserved, were men actually inspired and invested with a prophetic character, but such only as were the disciples of the prophets, and candidates for that office. For it is not unlikely, that, even to Jezebel's time, there were remaining in Israel schools of the prophets, which she endeavoured to destroy, as well as those that were bred up in them, that there might be none left to instruct the people in the true religion. These she certainly looked upon as enemies to her idolatry, and might possibly persuade her husband, that they were disaffected to his government, and favourers of the kings of Judah, because they worshipped the same God, and thought that the proper place of his worship was Jerusalem: And therefore, the greater was the piety and courage of Obadiah, in rescuing so many victims from the hands of this furious and enraged woman; *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

undertook

undertook to prove that they were no more than false gods, if so be the king would be pleased to summon all the people to meet upon mount Carmel, and to bring thither the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal, together with the four hundred priests of Astarte, who were supported at Jezebel's table.

Elijah had told Ahab, that (a) *there should be neither dew nor rain upon the earth, but according to his word*; and therefore the king being persuaded, perhaps, that the national remedy was in his hands, neglected not to issue out writs for the convention of the people, and ordered the priests to attend. When they were all met together, Elijah, having first upbraided them with their vile prevarication, in mixing the worship of God and the worship of Baal together, made them a fair proposal to this effect: "Since there can be no more than one infinite, supreme, almighty, and independent being, let us, at this time, make the experiment who this being is. You, who are the worshippers of Baal, have all the advantages on your side, the favour and protection of the court, four hundred and fifty priests of one kind, and four hundred of another; whereas I, who am the manager of God's cause, am but one poor banished man; and yet let two oxen be brought before us. Let the priests of Baal chuse their ox, dress it, cut it in pieces, lay it on the altar, but let there be no fire thereon; and I, in like manner, will do so to my ox. Let them pray unto their gods, and I likewise will call on the name of Jehovah; and then let the God, who, by consuming the sacrifice † with a sudden flash of fire, shall make it appear, that he hath heard the prayers, be owned by this whole assembly to be this one, this true supreme, independent being."

This was a proposal that none could gainsay; and therefore the priests of Baal prepared their altar, sacrificed their

(a) 1 Kings xvii. 1.

† This is not the first time, wherein God had declared his approbation of his worshippers, by sending down fire to consume their sacrifices, Lev. ix. 24. and Judg. vi. 21. and though perhaps it may be possible for evil spirits, who may have great knowledge how to manage meteors and exhalations to their purposes, to make fire descend from the clouds; yet since they can do nothing without a divine permission, it is absurd to think, that, in a competition between him and false gods, he should give evil spirits any licence to rival him in his miracles; *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

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bullock, placed it on the altar, and began to call upon their god : But Baal continuing deaf to their invocations, they betook themselves to odd gesticulations : They sometimes jumped over the altar, sometimes danced round it, and (according as their custom was) began * to cut themselves with knives and lancets ; but all to no purpose : Whereupon the true prophet * fell a bantering and ridiculing them, (as justly he might) ; but their senseless idol knew nothing of the matter.

This farce of devotion they continued till the day was above half spent ; when Elijah, desiring the people to draw near, and taking twelve stones, according to the number

* A strange method, one would think, to obtain the favour of their gods ! And yet, if we look into antiquity, we shall find, that nothing was more common, in the religious rites of several nations than this barbarous custom. To this purpose we may observe, that (as Plutarch, *De superstitione*, tells us) the priests of Bellona, when they sacrificed to that goddess, were wont to besmear the victim with their own blood ; that the Persian Magi (according to Herodotus, lib. vii. c. 191.) used to appease tempests, and allay the winds, by making incisions in their flesh ; that they who carried about the Syrian goddesses, (as Apuleius, lib. viii. relates), among other mad pranks, were, every now and then cutting and flashing themselves with knives, till the blood gushed out ; and that, even to this day, some modern travellers tell us, that in Turkey, Persia, and several parts of the Indies, there are a kind of fanatics, who think they do a very meritorious thing, and what is highly acceptable to the Deity, in cutting and mangling their own flesh. “ *Dii autem nullo debent coli genere*” (says Seneca, as he is quoted by St. Austin *De civ. Dei*, lib. vi. c. 10.) *si et hoc volunt. Tantus est perturbata mentis, et sedibus suis pulsa furor, ut sic Dii placentur, quemadmodum ne homines quidem sapiunt teterrimi, et in fabulas tradita crudelitatis, &c.* ; *Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

* The words of the prophet are very cutting and sarcastical. *Cry aloud, for he is a god* no doubt, though he may be somewhat deaf, or a great way off, so that he cannot hear unless you cry aloud ; or *either he is talking about business, or pursuing his pleasures ; or perhaps he is in a journey, and not at home ; or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened.* The two last notions, of *being asleep, and not at home*, how absurd soever they may be when applied to the Deity, were certainly such as several idolaters conceived of their gods, as appears from some passages in Homer. In

the

number of the tribes, * repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been broken down, and then laying his bullock on the wood, † poured a great quantity of water three times on the sacrifice, on the wood, and on the altar ; so that the water filled the trench, which was dug

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former of these, Thetis, says he, cannot meet with Jupiter, because he was gone abroad, and would not return in less than twelve days.

The Sire of Gods, and all the æthereal train,

On the warm limits of the farthest main,

Now mix with mortals, &c.

Twelve days the powers indulge, &c.

Pope's Homer's Iliad, b. i. l. 554.

And in the conclusion of that book, he shews us in what manner the gods went to sleep.

Then to their starry domes the Gods depart :

Jove on his couch reclin'd his awful head,

And Juno slumber'd on the golden bed.

* The altar, which the sacred author here calls *the altar of the Lord*, was certainly one of those which were built in the time of the Judges, and first kings of Israel ; when, for want of a fixed place of worship, such structures were permitted. Both Tacitus, lib. ii. c. 74. and Suetonius, speak of the God of Carmel, whom Vespasian went to consult when he was at Judea. His priest Basilides promised him all manner of prosperity and success in his undertakings ; but (as the two historians tell us) there was neither temple nor statue upon the mountain, but one altar only, plain, but very venerable for its antiquity. Some are of opinion, that this Basilides was a Jew, and priest of the Most High God ; but it seems more reasonable, that he was a Pagan priest, and probably the same who met Vespasian in the temple of Serapis in Egypt. However this be, the altar of Carmel seems to have had its original from this altar of the true God, which the ancient Hebrews first erected, and Elijah afterwards repaired ; which even the Heathens held in such veneration, that, when they came to be masters of the country, they would not place so much as an image by it ; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† This the prophet did to make the miracle more conspicuous and convincing, to shew, that there was no fallacy in it, no fire concealed in or about the altar, but that the lightning, which was to consume the sacrifice, came from heaven, and came at his invocation ; for so Josephus tells us, that Elijah invited the people to draw near, even that they might search, and spy every where, if they could find any fire that was secretly conveyed under the altar ; *Jewish Antiq. lib. viii. c. 7. ; Calmet's and Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

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round the altar to receive it. It was now much about the time of offering the evening sacrifice, when, having prepared all things, he approached the altar, and prayed in this manner : *Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, shew this day, that thou art the God of Israel, that I am thy servant, and that it is by thy commandment that I have done this thing.* † *Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that these people may understand that thou art the Lord God, and that their hearts may be converted from their idol unto thee.* And no sooner had he ended this short prayer, but a fire fell from heaven, and consumed not only the burnt-offering, but the wood and stones, nay, the very dust of the place, and the water that was in the trench ; insomuch, that when the people saw the miracle, they fell on their faces, and, in admiration and acknowledgment of it, owned, that the God of Elijah was the true God : Whereupon he ordered them to seize on the priests of Baal as a pack of cheats and impostors, to carry them down from the mountain, and to slay them all at the brook Kishon.

After this just execution was finished, the prophet returned to the top of the mountain, from whence he might view the Mediterranean sea ; where, having prayed for rain, he sent his servant seven times to see if he could perceive any appearance of it : And he at last brought him back word, that he saw a small cloud rising out of the sea, no bigger (to look at) than a man's hand ; whereupon he commanded him immediately to go to Ahab, and to advise him to hasten to his chariot, and make the best of his way home, lest the rain should stop him. The king took his advice, and the prophet, having † girded up his west about him, ran all the way before him to Jezreel.

As

† He was the more earnest and fervent in his prayer, (as Abarbanel thinks), because he had undertaken to make the experiment of God's power on his own accord, and without any particular command from him, nothing doubting, but that he would appear to vindicate his own honour, even though he offered sacrifices on an high place, which was not agreeable to the law ; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† In this country, loose and long garments were in use ; and therefore, when the people were minded to run, or to make any great expedition, their custom was to gird them round their waste : But why the prophet condescended to become, as it were, the king's running

As soon as Queen Jezebel understood what Elijah had done, and more especially how he has caused all the prophets of Baal to be slain, she vowed revenge, and † sent him word, that his life the next day should certainly pay for theirs: Whereupon, not thinking himself safe in Ahab's dominions, he withdrew to a town, in the southern part of the tribe of Judah, called *Beersebeba*, where he dismissed his servant, and, pursuing his journey farther into Arabia Petræa, walked all day: But in the evening, being extremely fatigued, he laid himself down under a juniper tree, sick with the world, and desirous to leave it. He had not however slept long, before an angel, who had brought him meat and drink, awoke him, and bad him eat heartily, because he had a long journey to take. The prophet did as he was ordered, and, in the strength of that repast, walked || forty days and forty nights, until he came to mount

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
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His flying
from Jeze-
bel's re-
venge, and
appointing
Elisha to
the prophetic
office.

running footman upon this occasion, was to shew the world, that his extraordinary power, in working miracles, and the conquest he had thereby gained over his enemies, had not made him proud; and to satisfy the king of his readiness to do him all the honour imaginable; that he was far from being his enemy, and only desired he would become the true worshipper of God, who was (as he could not but see) the Lord God of Israel; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† This certainly was the effect of her blind rage, and not of any prudence in her: For prudence would have advised her to conceal her resentment, until she had been ready to put her designs in execution; whereas this sending him word was giving him notice of his danger, and admonishing him to avoid it. But, since he had the confidence to come where she was, she might think perhaps, that he was as courageous as she was furious; that upon this notice he would scorn to fly; and she too, in her pride, might scorn to kill him secretly or surreptitiously, resolving to make him a public sacrifice; *Patrick's Commentary*; and *Pool's Annotations*.

|| From Beersebeba to mount Horeb is, at the most, not above one hundred and fifty miles, and the prophet it seems had advanced one day's journey into the wilderness; so that he had not now more to finish than any active man might have done in four or five days at most: How came the prophet then to make forty of it? To this some reply, That he (as the Israelites of old) was kept wandering up and down this pathless wilderness forty days, as they were forty years, till at length, he hit upon this sacred mountain. Others suppose, that he went about by private ways, and perhaps sometimes rested, and lay hid, in order to prevent discovery. But, when he was
got

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mount Horeb, the place where God at first delivered the law to Moses. Here he betook himself to a cave, intending very probably to spend the remainder of his days in retirement; but he had not been long in the place, before he had a vision, wherein God having first, by several † emblems, made him sensible of his almighty power and presence, gave him to understand, that the number of his

got into the wilderness, one would think, he might have been safe; and proceeded straitway (if he knew the straitway) to the place intended. I was thinking therefore, that there would be no solecism, if we should say, that the time of going to, staying at, and coming from, the mount of Horeb, is to be excluded in these forty days, though, in a short narration, words may be so expressed, as if the journey only had taken up all that time; *Patrick's, Calmet's, and Le Clerc's Commentaries.*

† Elijah being now come to the same place, where God had delivered the law to his servant Moses, God was minded to communicate the like favour to his servant the prophet, viz. to unveil his Majesty to him, and give him some signal of his immediate presence: But there is something very remarkable in the words of the text;—*And behold the Lord passed by, and a strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks, but the Lord was not in the wind; and, after the wind, an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and, after the earthquake, a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and, after the fire, a still small voice,* 1 Kings xix. 11. &c. And various are the speculations which this appearance of the divine Majesty hath suggested to interpreters. The generality of them have looked upon this as a figure of the gospel-dispensation, which came, not in such a terrible manner as the law did, with storms, thunders, lightnings, and earthquakes, (Exod. xix. 16.) but with great lenity and sweetness, wherein God speaks to us by his son, who makes use of no other but gentle arguments and soft persuasions. But, if we take this to be a symbolical admonition to Elijah, according to the circumstances he was then in, we may reasonably suppose; that herein God intended to show him, that, tho' he had all the elements ready armed at his command to destroy idolaters; if he pleased to make use of them, yet he had rather attain his end by patience, and tenderness, and long-suffering, (signified by that small still voice, wherein the Deity exhibited himself), and consequently, that the prophet should hereby be incited to imitate him; bridling that passionate zeal to which his natural complexion did but too much incline him; *Le Clerc's, Calmet's, and Patrick's Commentaries.*

true worshippers was greater than he imagined, and that he would not fail to take vengeance on the house of Ahab for their abominable idolatry. To this purpose he ordered him to return into his own country by the way of Damascus, where he was to anoint Hazael king of Syria, Jehu king of Israel, and to appoint Elisha his successor in the prophetic office; intimating hereby, that these men † would be proper instruments, in his almighty hand, whereby to punish the idolatry of Israel, and to assert the righteousness of his own cause.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1003, etc.
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† The words in the text are, ——— *And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael, shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu, shall Elisha slay,* 1 Kings xix. 17. Where it is easy to observe, that these things are not mentioned according to the order of time wherein they fell out; (for Elisha was a prophet before Hazael was king, and Hazael was king before Jehu), but they are spoken of according to the decree of God, who (as Abarbinel observes) appointed every one to execute that which was proper for him to do: “ Thus he intended (continues that learned commentator) that Hazael should destroy the idolaters of Israel in battle, and therefore he mentions that first, because it is a general calamity; but as Jezebel, the children of Ahab, and the priests of Baal, went not to fight, and consequently could not fall in battle, he ordained Jehu to cut off them, and all the worshippers of Baal, in the manner that we find he did: But as he did not know the disposition of little children, he left them to be punished by Elisha, who, by the spirit of prophecy, foresaw that they would become idolaters.” But in this there seems to be more subtilty than needs, since the plain sense of the words is no more than this: — “ That God, in his providence, had appointed three persons to punish the Israelites according to their deeds; and that one or other of these should infallibly execute his judgments upon them.” The only difficulty is, how the prophet Elisha can be said to slay, when, by profession, he was a pacific man, and never engaged in war? But when we consider the two and forty children which he destroyed, besides others, whom, upon the like occasion, he might destroy; the fore famine, which, by God’s appointment, he sent upon the Israelites, 2 Kings vi. 25.; and the many cutting prophecies and comminations (called in Scripture *the sword of the mouth*, Isaiah xlix. 2. and Rev. i. 16.) which he denounced against them, and were fulfilled, we shall find reason enough to justify the expression; *Pool’s Annotations.*

This

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ
1003, &c.
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This was a matter of some comfortable expectation to Elijah; and therefore leaving Horeb in his return by the way of Damascus, * he found Elisha at plough, and as he passed by, † cast his mantle upon him; which the other understanding to be a call to the prophetic ministry, as soon as he had settled his private concerns, went with Elijah, and was his servant as long as he lived; so that Elijah did not think it necessary to go to Damascus, upon the account of Hazael, nor to speak with Jehu in Israel; but left these affairs to be transacted by Elisha, whenever a fit opportunity should offer.

Ahab de-
feats Benha-
dad twice,
and at last
makes a
dishonour-
able peace
with him.

Not long after this, (but upon what provocation it is not said), Benhadad raised a vast army against Ahab king of Israel, and marched directly into his country, with a design to invest Samaria, his capital city: But before he did that, he sent him an haughty message, demanding all that belonged to him in satisfaction for some presumed affront. Ahab was in no condition to oppose him, and therefore he tamely submitted himself to his mercy: But this tameness only inflamed Benhadad's insolence, so that, in his next message, he demanded all things to be imme-

* So far was this from being any argument of his poverty, that it was in reality a token of his wealth and great riches: For he who could keep twelve yoke of oxen at plough, was in this respect no inconsiderable man, and yet (according to the manner of these early times) he looked after his own business himself; for nothing was of greater esteem, not only among the Hebrews, but among the ancient Greeks and Romans likewise, than agriculture, and such persons as were of the best quality were called *αὐτάρκτοι*, men who did their work themselves, and left not the care of it to others. Elisha therefore was taken from the plough to be a prophet, in like manner as, among the Romans afterwards, some were taken from thence to be consuls and dictators; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The mantle was the proper habit of prophets, 2 Kings i. 8; and therefore Elijah's casting it upon him was the ceremony here used for his inauguration: Though, as it was customary for servants to carry their masters garments after them, others understand it only as a token that Elisha was to be his servant, to attend upon him, and succeed in his office. However this be, it is probable, that when he cast his mantle upon him, he said something to Elisha, whereby he acquainted him with his design, though the particular words, in so short an history, are not expressed; *Pool's Annotations*; and *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

diately

diately put into his hand; which when the king of Israel understood, he called a general council of the kingdom to advise what to do. They unanimously agreed to stand by their king to the last extremity; which when Benhadad's ambassadors told him, he fell into a great rage, and immediately ordered his army to invest Samaria; but while he lay before the town, God, who was justly provoked at this proud Syrian, sent † a prophet to Ahab, not only to assure him of victory, but to instruct him likewise † in what method he was to obtain it; which succeeded so well, that Benhadad himself had much to do to escape with his life.

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The same prophet however gave the king of Israel great caution to recruit his army, and be upon his guard, against the beginning of the next year, because then the Syrians designed him another visit; which accordingly came to pass. For some of his generals having persuaded the king of Syria, that the gods of the Israelites * were gods

† Who the prophet was, who, upon this and another message afterwards, was sent to Ahab, the Scripture no where informs us. It is somewhat odd, that, during this whole war with Benhadad, neither Elijah nor Elisha, the two principal prophets of Israel, should appear, though other prophets (whereof there seems to be a considerable number) make no scruple of executing their office; whether it was, that this war commenced before Jezebel's persecution of the prophets, or that this impious queen abated her persecution, and let them have some respite, when she had exterminated Elijah as she thought; Calmet's Commentary.

† The instruments in attaining this victory were to be the young men of the princes of the provinces, with Ahab at the head of them, 1 Kings xx. 14. The Hebrew word has some ambiguity in it, and may signify either the sons or the servants of the princes of the provinces, either young noblemen themselves, or their fathers pages, who were equally brought up delicately, and quite unaccustomed to war. It was by these young men, and not by old experienced officers, that this battle was to be won; that thereby it might appear, that the victory was wholly owing to God's gracious and powerful providence, and not to the valour, or fitness, of the instruments; Pool's Annotations.

* That there were many gods, who had each their particular charge and jurisdiction; that some presided over whole countries, whilst others had but particular places under their tuition and government; and were some of them gods of the woods, others of the

A. M.
3001, etc.
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1003, etc.
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gods of the hills, and therefore, to fight them with advantage, was to fight them in a champaign country, he raised another army of equal force with what he had lost the year before, and came and sat down before Apheck, a city in the tribe of Asher. Ahab, however, was prepared to receive him, and though with a force far inferiour to the Syrians, marched out to meet them; gave them battle, put them to the rout, and slew upon the spot an hundred thousand of them.

The vanquished † betook themselves to Apheck, but were far from finding any security there; for the providence

rivers, and others of the mountains, was plainly the doctrine of all Heathen nations. Pan was reckoned the god of the mountains, for which reason he was styled *Ὀρεῖβάρης*; and in like manner the Syrians might have a conceit, that the God of Israel was a God of the mountains, because Canaan (they saw) was a mountainous land; the Israelites (they perceived) delighted to sacrifice on high-places: Their law (they might have heard) was given on the top of a mountain; their temple stood upon a famous eminence, as did Samaria, where they had so lately received a signal defeat. For their farther notion was, that the gods of the mountains had a power to inject a panic fear into an army, whenever they pleased. Nay, that they did not only assist with their influence, but actually engage themselves in battle, in behalf of their favourites, is a sentiment as old as Homer, and what Virgil has not forgot to imitate.

Omnigenumque deum monstra, et latrator *Anubis*,
Contra *Neptunum*, et *Venerem*, contraque *Minervam*
Tela tenent; sævit medio in certamine *Mavors*
Cælatus ferro, tristisque ex æthere *Dira*,
Et scissâ gaudens vadit *Discordia* Pallâ,
Quam cum fanguineo sequitur *Bellona* flagello.

Æneid. viii.

† Apheck, or Aphaca (as it is called by profane authors) was situated in Libanus, upon the river Adonis, between Heliopolis and Biblos; and, in all probability, is the same that Paul Lucas, in his voyage *du Levant*, vol. i. chap. 20. speaks of, as swallowed up in a lake of mount Libanus, about nine miles in circumference, wherein there are several houses all entire to be seen under water. The soil about this place (as the ancients tell us) was very bituminous, which seems to confirm their opinion, who think that subterraneous fires consumed the solid substance of the earth, whereon the city stood, so that it subsided and sunk

at

vidence of God pursued them, and by the fall of the walls of that city, destroyed seven and twenty thousand more of them : So that, terrified with this judgment, Benhadad went to hide himself in some place where he thought he could not be easily found ; but was, at length, prevailed on by his chief officers to send ambassadors to Ahab in the humblest manner, cloathed † in sackcloth, and with ropes about their necks, to make their submission upon what conditions he pleased. The conditions that Ahab insisted on, were only, that the Syrians should restore all the country which they had taken from Baasha King of Israel, and grant † him some privileges in Damascus their capital, as a token of their homage and subjection ; which the other very readily consented to, and so a league was concluded between them : But a league so offensive to God, that he sent a prophet immediately to reprove Ahab for it ; and to let him know, “ That had he destroyed Benhadad, “ (as God had put it in his power), his dominions should “ have been annexed to the kingdom of Israel ; but that

A. M.
3001, &c.
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at once, and a lake was soon formed in its place ; *Calmet's Commentary and Dictionary*, under the word *Apheck*.

† This was the posture, in those times, wherein supplicants presented themselves when they petitioned for mercy. The sackcloth upon their loins was a token of great sorrow for what they had done ; and the halters about their necks, a token of their subjection to whatever punishment Ahab should think fit to inflict upon them : For which reason Bessus (according to Curtius, lib. vii.) was brought to Alexander with a chain about his neck ; *Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

† The privilege which Benhadad gave to Ahab is thus expressed :—*Thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria* ; but then the learned are not agreed what we are to understand by *streets*. Some suppose, that they were courts of judicature where Ahab was to maintain a jurisdiction over Benhadad's subjects. Others think, that they were public market-places, where commodities were sold, and the toll of them paid to Ahab ; but the most general opinion is, that they were citadels or fortifications, to be a bridle of restraint upon this chief city of the Syrians, that they might make no new irruptions into the land of Israel. A great privilege this ! But what Benhadad, when he found himself set at liberty, refused to comply with ; *Patrick's* and *Calmet's Commentaries*.

A. M. 3001, etc. Ant. Chris. 1003, &c. from 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

“ || since he had acted otherwise, his life should pay for the life of Benhadad : For he should be slain in battle with the Syrians, who instead of being held in subjection to the Israelites, should, in a few years (as they were in the reign of Hazael) become their masters, take their towns from them, and make ravages in their country.”

But instead of humbling himself at the denunciation of this heavy sentence, or expressing any sorrow for his fault, Ahab became but more fullen and obstinate, and in a short time, † added this farther offence to his other great crimes.

Jezebel procures the murder of Naboth, for which God threatens Ahab, and his posterity.

Not far from the royal palace of Jezreel, in a place convenient for a kitchen garden, there was one Naboth, a citizen thereof, who had a vineyard, which Ahab was very desirous of obtaining; and therefore † offered the owner of it

|| If it should be asked, wherein lay Ahab's great offence, for which God threatens to punish him so severely? The answer is, —That it consisted in suffering so horrid a blasphemer as Benhadad was, to go unpunished, which was contrary to an express law, Lev. xxiv. 16. If it should be urged, that this was nothing to Benhadad, since the law concerned the Israelites only, the reply is, —That this law extended not to those only that were born in the land, but (as it is there expressed) to strangers likewise that were among them, and in their power, as Benhadad certainly was. God had delivered him into Ahab's hands for his blasphemy, as he had promised, 1 Kings xx. 28.; and therefore this act of providence, compared with the law, did plainly intimate, that he was appointed by God for destruction: But so far was Ahab from punishing him as he deserved, that he treats him like a friend and a brother, dismisses him upon easy terms, and takes his bare word for the performance, without the least care for the reparation of God's honour; *Pool's Annotations.*

† The account of Ahab's coveting Naboth's vineyard (as Abarbinel observes) is immediately set after his treatment of Benhadad, to show his extreme great wickedness in sparing him, (as Saul did Agag king of the Amalekites), and killing Naboth, that he might get possession of his vineyard. For this was an high aggravation of his crime, that he basely murdered a just Israelite, and let an impious enemy escape; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† By this it appears, that though the kings of Israel did rule their subjects in a very arbitrary and despotic manner, yet they did not as yet take the liberty to seize on their lands and hereditaments;

it an equivalent, either in land or money; but the owner, † upon the account of its being his paternal inheritance, refusing to part with it, gave Ahab such uneasiness, that he took his bed for mere discontent, and was so fullen and uneasy, that he would not eat his meat. But when his wife Jezebel came to understand the cause, she first upbraided him with his pusillanimity, or not knowing how to exert the authority of a king, and then (to cheer him up) bid him drive away all melancholy, for that she had found out an expedient, how to put him in the possession of Naboth's vineyard. To this purpose she wrote letters from Samaria in Ahab's name, and sealed with his signet, to the principal men in Jezreel, ordering them † to proclaim a

A. M.
3001, *Sc.*
Ant. Chron.
1003, *Sc.*
from
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ditaments; and therefore what Samuel prophesies of the kings of Israel, that *they would take their fields, their vineyards, and their olive yards*, 1 Sam. viii. 14. does not extend to any true and lawful, but a presumed and usurped right only in their kings; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† As it is natural to all men to love and value the ancient possessions that have been in their family; so the law of Moses prohibited the alienation of lands from one tribe or family to another, unless a man was reduced to poverty, in which case he might sell it to the jubilee; but then it was to revert to him again, Lev. xxv. 15, 25, 28. Now as Naboth was in no need to sell his vineyard, so he considered with himself, that if merely to do the king a pleasure, he should part with it out of his hands, especially to be made a garden, and so annexed to the palace, neither he, nor his posterity, should ever be able to recover it again; so that, in this act, he should both offend God, and injure his posterity, which he, being a pious and religious man, durst not adventure to do; *Pool's Annotations*.

† It was always a customary thing, upon the approach of any great calamity, or the apprehension of any national judgment, to proclaim a fast; and Jezebel ordered such a fast to be observed in Jezreel, the better to conceal her design against Naboth. For, by this means, she intimated to the Jezreelites, that they had some accursed thing among them, which was ready to draw down the vengeance of God upon their city; and that therefore it was their business to inquire into all those sins which provoked God to anger against them, and to purge them out effectually. As therefore these days of fasting were employed in punishing offenders, doing justice, and imploring God's pardon, they gave the elders of the city an occasion to convene an assembly, and the false witnesses a fair opportunity to accuse Naboth before them; *Le Clerc's and Patrick's Commentaries*.

fast

A. M. 3001, etc.
 Ant. Chris. 1003, etc.
 from 1 Kings viii.
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fast, to bring † Naboth before the judges, and to suborn two false witnesses, who should depose against him, that he had † blasphemed God and the king, that so he might be carried out of the city, and stoned. † All this was done according to this wicked woman's desire; and, as soon as Ahab understood that Naboth was dead, he went to Jezreel, and took possession of his vineyard: But upon his return to Samaria, the prophet Elijah, by God's direction, met him, and having upbraided him with this his last flagitiousness, in slaying the innocent, and seizing on his inheritance,

† Josephus is of opinion, that, as Naboth was of an illustrious house, he was ordered to be set in an honourable place among the elders and chief rulers of the city; that so it might be thought, that they did not condemn him out of hatred or ill-will, but merely as they were constrained to it by the evidence that was given against him. But others will have it, that the reason why he was set in an eminent place was only, because persons accused and arraigned were wont to stand conspicuous before their judges, that all the people might see them, and hear both the accusations against them, and their defence; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† By the law of Moses it was death to blaspheme God, Lev. xxiv. 16.; and by custom it was death to revile the king, Exod. xxii. 28. Now, in order to make safe work, the evidences (as they were instructed) accused Naboth of both these crimes, that the people might be the better satisfied to see him stoned. There is this difference, however, to be observed between these two crimes, that, if a man had only blasphemed God, he was to be tried by the great court at Jerusalem, (as the Hebrew doctors tell us), and his goods came to his heirs; whereas, when a man was executed for treason against the king, his estate went to the exchequer, and was forfeited to him against whom the offence was committed; and for this reason it was, that they accused Naboth of this crime likewise, that his estate might be confiscated, and Ahab, by that means, get possession of his vineyard; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† Princes never want instruments to execute their pleasure; and yet it is strange that, among all these judges and great men, there should be none that abhorred such a villany. It must be considered, however, that for a long while they had cast off all fear and sense of God, and prostituted their consciences to please their king: nor durst they disobey Jezebel's commands, who had the full power and government of the king, (as they well knew), and could easily have taken away their lives, had they refused to condemn Naboth; *Pool's Annotations*.

he

he denounced this heavy sentence against him, "That, in A. M. 3001, etc.
 "the same manner *that dogs had licked Naboth's blood, they* Ant. Christ.
 "should lick his; that all his posterity should die by the 1003, &c.
 "sword, and be exposed without the honour of a decent from
 "funeral; and that, as to his wife Jezebel, she should be 1 Kings viii.
 "devoured by *dogs near the wall of Jezreel,*" i. e. || where to the end
 Naboth was judged, and unjustly condemned. of 2 Chron.

Uneasy at the sight of the prophet, and much more terrified at his denunciations, Ahab rent his cloaths, put on sack-cloth, and gave other indications of his sorrow and humiliation: but, as his repentance was neither sincere or persevering, God, (who might otherwise have revoked the whole sentence) inflicted part of it upon his person; but the utter extirpation of his family did not happen, till the reign of his son Jehoram, as we shall see in its proper place.

Jehoshaphat King of Judah (as we said before) had imprudently married his son and heir to this wicked Ahab's daughter; and as this alliance occasioned an interview between the two kings, Jehoshaphat went one day to Samaria to visit Ahab, who entertained him and his attendants very splendidly; but taking the advantage of this opportunity, invited him to go along with him to the siege of Ramoth-Gilead, a town in the tribe of Gad, which the King of Syria unjustly detained from him. Jehoshaphat agreed to attend him; but being loth to do any thing of this kind without a divine approbation, he desired of Ahab to enquire of the prophets concerning the event of this expedition. To this purpose Ahab summoned together four hundred priests of the goddess Astarte, who unanimously agreed, that the expedition would prove successful; but as Jehoshaphat's purpose was, not to inquire of these, but of some true prophet of the Lord, with much difficulty he obtained of Ahab to have Micaiah produced, who, charging

|| There is a great dispute among the learned, as to the accomplishment of this prophecy. At first, it was, no doubt, intended to be literally fulfilled; but upon Ahab's repentance, (as we find below), the punishment was transferred from him to his son Jehoram, in whom it was actually accomplished; for his *dead body was cast into the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite*, for the dogs to devour, 2 Kings ix. 25. Since Ahab's blood therefore was licked by dogs, not at Jezreel, but at Samaria, it seems necessary that we should understand the Hebrew word

A. M.
5001, etc.
Ant. Chris.
5003, &c.
from
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to the end
of 2 Chron.

ging † Ahab's prophets with falsehood, foretold, that the enterprize would prove fatal to all Israel, and to Ahab in particular; and therefore he advised both kings to desist.

Ahab, however, instead of listening to Micaiah, ordered him into custody, until he should return in peace; and taking Jehoshaphat with him, marched with all his forces to the siege: But when he came within sight of the enemy's army, his courage began to cool, and thinking to evade the force of Micaiah's prophecy by a stratagem of his own, he put himself in the garb of a common officer, and advised Jehoshaphat to fight in his royal robes. The King of Syria had given particular command to his generals † to single out Ahab, and, if possible, to kill him, as the chief author of the war. At first they mistook Jehoshaphat for the King of Israel, and therefore fell upon him with great impetuosity: But perceiving at length, that he was not the person they wanted, they desisted from the pursuit of him, and, in quest of Ahab, bended their course another way.

Ahab, however did not gain much by his politic project, as he thought it; for he was mortally wounded by a random

word which our translation renders *in the place where*, not as denoting the place, but the manner in which the thing was done; and so the sense of the passage will be,—That as dogs licked, or in like manner as dogs licked Naboth's blood; even so shall they like thine; observe what I say, even thine; *Pool's Annotations.*

† Micaiah's answer to Ahab, inquiring of him the success of his intended expedition, is, *Go, and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver the city into the hands of the king*, 1 Kings xxii. 15. which does not at all contradict the other prophets, had it been spoken in earnest; but we have good reason to believe, that the words were spoken ironically, and in mockery to the promises which the other prophets made Ahab. Accordingly, we may observe by Ahab's reply, that he suspected Micaiah's sincerity, and, either by his gesture or manner of speaking, gathered, that his meaning was to traduce these false prophets for their answers. So that Micaiah's answer is in effect, as if he had said,—“Since thou dost not seek to know the truth, but only to please thyself, go to the battle, as all thy prophets advise thee; expect the success which they promise thee, and try the truth of their predictions by thy dear-bought experience;” *Pool's Annotations.*

† This Benhadad might order, either in policy, as supposing this to be the best and readiest way to put an end to the war;

random arrow : And though he was held up in his chariot for some time, with his face towards the enemy, to encourage his foldiers, yet about sunfet he died, and a retreat was founded. His dead body was carried to Samaria, and there buried, and his son Ahaziah fucceeded him in the kingdom : But as the chariot wherein he was carried, was all ftained with the flux of blood from his wound, while it was wafhed in a pool near the city, the dogs came and licked it, that the prophecy of Elijah might not altogether go unfulfilled.

A. M.
3001, etc.
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1003, etc.
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to the end
of 2 Chron.

As for Jehoshaphat, though he efaped from the battle, and returned in peace to Jerufalem, yet God fent the prophet Jehu, to reprove him for his having affifted Ahab, who was * God's avowed enemy : But this fault he endeavoured to repair by the good orders which he eftablifhed in his dominions, both as to civil and religious affairs ; by appointing honeft and able judges, * and giving them proper

or with a defign to take him prifoner, that thereby he might wipe out the ftain of his own captivity, and recover the honour and advantages which he then loft ; *Pool's Annotations.*

* Even common reafon taught the Heathens not to make any friendship with fuch as were enemies to the gods ; and therefore Callimachus, in his hymn to Ceres, tells her,

Δάμνητε μὴ τῆνος εἶναι φίλος, ὅς τοι ἀπεχθῆς
Ἴειν, μὴδ' ὁμότοιχος, ἐμοὶ κακογείτονος ἐχθρός.

Whereupon the illuftrious Spanheim has obferved many fimilar fayings among the Heathens, and how the ancient Greeks abhorred to lodge in the fame houfe, or to eat at the fame table, with a murder-er, or any grievous criminal, for the fame reafon, perhaps, that Horace has expreffed upon the like occafion.

——vetabo, qui Cereris facrum

Vulgarit arcaæ, fub iisdem

Sit trabibus, fragilenive mecum

Solvat phafelum. Sæpe Diespiter

Neglectus inceflo, addidit integrum :

Raro antecedentem fceleftum

Deferuit pede pœna claudio.

Lib. iii. Ode 2.

* The charge or folemn admonition which Jehoshaphat gave the judges, whom he appointed in each city, runs in thefe words :

——Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment ; wherefore now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you : Take heed and do it ; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, no refpect of perfons, nor taking of gifts, 2 Chron. xix. 6. 7. It is a remarkable faying of Cicero, that judges, being fworn to do juftice, fhould remember, when they

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ
1003, etc.
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of 2 Chron.

per charges ; by regulating the discipline and order of the priests and Levites, and by enjoining them to perform punctually their respective duties in the service of God. Nor was it long before he experimentally found the favour of God extended to him in a most miraculous manner, for this his reformation. For when the Moabites and Ammonites, with their auxiliaries, made a formidable invasion upon his kingdom, and he thereupon had appointed a public fast, and applied himself to God for help * by humiliation and prayer,

come to pass sentence, “ Deum habere testem ; id est, ut, ego “ arbitror, mentem suam, qua nihil homini dedit ipse Deus divi- “ nus ;” *De Offic. lib. iii. c. 13.* Where he has left us this excellent instruction likewise, that “ a man must lay aside the person of a “ friend, when he puts on the person of a judge.” In like manner, there are several passages in Hesiod, admonishing those who have the administration of justice, to retain in their minds the consideration of their gods inspection; but one of these will answer to our purpose.

ὦ βασιλεῖς, ὑμῖς δὲ καταφραζεσθε καὶ αὐτοὶ
τὴν δὲ δίκην· ἐγὼς γὰρ ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἔοντες
Ἀθάνατοι λεύσσειν, ὅσοι σκολιῶσι δίκηςι
Ἀλλήλους τρέβουσι, Θεῶν ὅπιν ἐκ ἀλέγοντες.
Τρεῖς γὰρ μύριοι εἰσὶν ἐπὶ χθονὶ πελοβοίειρα
Ἀθάνατοι Ζηὸς, Φύλακες ἀνθρώπων,
Οἱ ῥα Φυλάσσειν τε δίκας, καὶ σχέτλια ἔργα,
Ἡέρα ἰσσομένοι, πᾶτη φοιτῶντες ἐπ’ αἶαν, Ἑρ.

De oper. et diebus. lin. 246.

* This prayer of Jehoshaphat's is deservedly accounted one of the most excellent that we meet with in sacred history. He begins it with an acknowledgment of God's supreme and irresistible power, which extends itself every where, over all creatures in heaven and earth, which are every one subject to his authority.—*O Lord God of our fathers, art thou not God in heaven ? And rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the Heathen ? And in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee ?* Then he remembers the peculiar relation which the people of Israel have to him ; the promise he made to Abraham, as a reward of his fidelity ; and the deed of gift which he conveyed to him and his posterity, of this country for ever : *Art thou not our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of the land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham, thy friend, for ever ?* Then he reminds him of the long possession they had had of the country, and of the temple which Solomon had built for his worship, to whom, at the consecration, (and therefore, he refers to Solomon's words

prayer, he had a most gracious answer vouchsafed him viz. That, on the next day, he should obtain a complete victory without once striking a stroke; which accordingly came to pass. For when Jehoshaphat drew up his army, near the place where the enemy lay, he found nothing there but dead bodies; God having been pleased, before his approach, so to confound their understanding, that being a mixt multitude of diverse nations, they, † some way or other, by mistake,

A. M.
3001, etc.
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at the consecration, 1 Kings viii.) he promised a gracious regard to all the prayers that should be offered there: *And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house), and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.* In the next place, he represents the foul ingratitude of their enemies, in invading a country to which they had no manner of title, even tho' the Israelites did them not the least harm when they came to take possession of it, but took the pains to march a long way about to get to it, rather than give any molestation; and in aggravation of their wickedness in this respect, he suggests, that by this invasion they made an attempt, not only upon the rights of the Israelites, but of God himself, who was the great Lord and proprietor from whom they held the land: *And now behold the children of Ammon and Moab, and mount Seir, whom thou wouldst not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession which thou gavest us to inherit.* Then he appeals to the justice of God, the righteous judge, who helps those that suffer wrong, especially when they have no other helper: For this is the last argument he makes use of to conciliate the divine assistance, even the weak condition wherein he and his people were, which made them the objects of the divine pity, especially since they placed their hope and confidence in him alone: *O Lord, our God, wilt thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company, that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee,* 2 Chron. xx. 12. &c.; with Patrick's Commentary on the words.

† The words in the text are, *The Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah, and they were smitten,* 2 Chron. xx. 22. And there are two ways wherein this slaughter may be supposed to have hap-

A. M.
3007, etc.
Ant. Christ.
3007, etc.
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1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

mistake, fell a slaying and destroying one another ; so that Jehoshaphat, and his people, had nothing else to do, but to carry off the arms and spoils of the dead, wherein they employed themselves for three whole days, and, on the fourth, meeting in a valley, (which, from this event, was called afterwards *the valley of blessing*), they gave solemn thanks to God for this deliverance ; and, not long after, Jehoshaphat, with his victorious troops, entering Jerusalem in triumph, was received with the joyful acclamations of his people, and struck such terror into all the neighbouring nations, that, for the remainder of his reign, he met with no molestation.

One loss, however, he had, towards the conclusion of his reign, † in joining with Ahaziah King of Israel, to equip out a fleet in the port of Ezion-Geber, in order to go to Tarshish ; for the whole fleet was dashed in pieces upon a ridge of rocks, that lay in the mouth of the harbour, before they ever got to sea. But, as Jehoshaphat was afterwards convinced, that this was a judgment of God upon him for entering into partnership with an impious prince, (as Ahaziah certainly was), the next fleet he set out was

pened : Either, 1st, By the ministry of God's angels, who might appear in the shape of men, and, putting on the appearance of Moabites or Ammonites, might smite some part of the army privately, and they, supposing this to be done by their neighbours, might turn about, and fall upon them like enemies, and so break forth into mutual slaughter : Or, 2d, By some jealousies and animosities among themselves, which, by degrees, brake forth, first into secret ambushments, which one party laid for another, and then into open hostilities and outrages to their total destruction. So easy a thing it is for God to defeat his enemies, who can, when he pleases, infatuate their designs, or arm their own passions and mistakes against them ; *Pool's Annotations* on 2 Chron. xx. 22.

† This certainly was a great weakness in him, to make friendship with the son, when he had been so sharply reproved for joining with his father Ahab, especially since the son was as great an idolater as the father : but unto this he was betrayed by the affinity that was between them ; and though he did not join with him in war, but only in trade, yet God was nevertheless displeased with him ; which shows how dangerous a thing it is to have too near a familiarity or commerce with idolaters, or any other very wicked men ; *Patrick's Commentary*.

from

from his other port of Elah, wherein he suffered Ahaziah to have no concern, and therefore came off with better success. The truth is, Jehoshaphat was a religious and good prince, a zealous and great reſormer, and yet the people ſtill retained a kindneſs for the high places. He lived fixty, and reigned twenty-five years; was buried in the city of David, and ſucceeded by his ſon Jehoram.

His father Jehoshaphat had ſix other ſons; but to give no umbrage for ſuſpicion, he had, in his life-time, removed them from all public buſineſs, made them governors of fenced cities, and given them ſeparate fortunes of their own. But, notwithstanding all this precaution, as ſoon as Jehoram was ſettled on the throne, he murdered all his brothers, and ſeveral chief men in Iſrael, who (as he ſuſpected) either adhered to their party, or were likely to revenge their deaths.

During theſe cruel proceedings, in the very beginning of his reign, he had a letter ſent him from Elijah, wherein

† Now, ſince it is plain, from 2 Kings ii. 11. &c. that Elijah was taken up into heaven, in the time of Jehoshaphat, the queſtion is, How could Elijah ſend his ſon a letter? For reſolution to this, Joſephus and others imagine, that this writing was indited in heaven, where Elijah now is, and ſent to Jehoram by the miniſtry of angels. But there is no reaſon to ſuppoſe, that ſo ſingular a miracle was wrought in favour of an idolatrous prince, *who had Moſes and the prophets*, which (in our Saviour's opinion) were ſufficient to inſtruct him in all points neceſſary to ſalvation, and needed not any additional writing to be ſent him from the other world. Others therefore are of opinion, that this letter was written before Elijah's aſcenſion into heaven; that, foreſeeing by the ſpirit of prophecy, the great wickedneſs Jehoram would fall into, he dictated the contents hereof to one of the prophets, charging him to put them down in writing, to ſend them in a letter to Jehoram, when he grew as impious as is here related; and to let him know withal, that Elijah commanded this writing to be delivered to him, upon preſumption that it would affect him the more, as it came from a perſon that was tranſlated into heaven. But this notion has no better foundation than the other: For prophets were ſent to thoſe who lived in their own age, to declare unto them the will of God, not to write letters fit to be delivered only when they had departed out of this life. God never left himſelf without a witneſs; and at this time more eſpecially, there were prophets in abundance: and therefore, others have ſuppoſed, that there has been a miſtake in the tranſcriber, and the name of Elijah

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Chriſt.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.
He is ſuc-
ceeded by
his ſon Je-
horam, who
proved a
bloody
prince, li-
ved wic-
kedly, and
died unlau-
dered.

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
x Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

wherein he upbraided him with the murder of his brothers, and his departure from the religion of his ancestors; and wherein † he threatened him with a sore disease in his bowels, and his wives, his children, and people, with judgments of several kinds, which God would send upon them: Nor was it long before these threats began to operate. The Edomites, who had all along been subject to the house of David, rebelled; and having expelled his deputy, made themselves a king of their own, and were never again subject to the Jewish yoke. Libnah, a city in his own dominions, shook off its allegiance, and refused to acknowledge him any longer for its sovereign. The Philistians and Arabians made inroads upon his territories, ravaged the country, plundered his palace, and carried away his very wives and children; so that they left none except Jehoahaz the youngest: and (to complete his misery) after God had afflicted him with a cruel dysentery, which for two years grievously tormented him, and brought him at last to his grave, he died, without being so much as lamented by his subjects; and, after a life of forty, and a reign of eight years, being buried indeed in the city of David, (but not in any of the royal sepulchres), was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz. But to return to the history of King Ahaziah.

Ahaziah's
wicked and
inglorious
reign.

Ahaziah, as we said, succeeded his father Ahab in the kingdom of Israel, in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat's

Elijah put for that of Elisha; or that the Elijah, by whom this letter was sent, was not the prophet who was taken up into heaven, but another of that name, who lived in the subsequent age, and was cotemporary with Jehoram. Which of these conjectures (for conjectures they are all) seems most feasible, we are at liberty to chuse, since any of them is sufficient to solve the above-mentioned difficulty; *Le Clerc's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

† There was no calamity that could be thought of (as several have observed) which did not befall this wicked prince. His kingdom was destroyed, and depopulated by the fiercest nations; his treasures ransacked; his wives carried into captivity; his children slain; himself afflicted with a sore disease for two years; and, when he was dead, denied the honour of a royal sepulture, such as his father had. All which calamities were threatened in this writing sent him in the name of Elijah, that he might not think that they came by chance, but by the special direction of Almighty God, as a punishment for his impiety; *Patrick's Commentary* on 2 Chron. xxi. 14.

reign,

reign, and was not a whit behind him in all manner of wickedness. But as his reign was but short, (in the whole not above the space of two years), so was it inglorious and full of trouble. For, in the first year of his reign, the Moabites, who had always been obedient to the kings of Israel from the first separation of the two kingdoms, took now an opportunity to revolt; nor had he power to reduce them to their subjection: For, in the second year of his reign, he received such a hurt by a fall from † the terras of his house, as reduced him to a very bad state of health. In this condition, he sent to * Baalzebub, the god of Ekron,

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end.
of 2 Chron.

† In the eastern countries the roofs of the houses were flat, and surrounded with a battlement, to prevent falling from them, because it was a customary thing for people to walk upon them, in order to take the air. Now, in this battlement, we may suppose that there were some wooden lattices for people to look through, of equal height with the parapet-wall, and that Ahaziah, negligently leaning on it, (as it was rotten and infirm), it broke down, and let him fall into the court or garden belonging to his house. Or there is another way whereby he might fall. In these flat roofs there was generally an opening which served instead of a sky-light to the house below; and this opening might be done over with lattice-work, which the king, as he was carelessly walking, might chance to step upon, and slip through. Nor is there any absurdity in supposing such lattice-work in a king's palace, when the world was not arrived to that height of art and curiosity that we find it in now; *Pool's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Dissert. sur les edifices des anciens Hebreux*.

* The word signifies, *the god of flies*; but how this idol came to obtain that name, is not so easy a matter to discover. Several are of opinion, that this god was called *Baal-femin, the Lord of heaven*, but that the Jews, by way of contempt, gave it the name of *Baalzebub*, or, *the lord of a fly*, a god that was nothing worth, or (as others say) whose temple was filled with flies; whereas the temple of Jerusalem (notwithstanding all the sacrifices that were daily offered) never once had a fly in it, as their doctors relate. The sacred writings, indeed, when they speak of the gods of the Heathens, very frequently call them, in general, *idols, vanity, abominations, &c.*; but they never change their proper names into such as are of an opprobrious import; neither can we think it likely, that the king of Israel would have called the god of Ekron, for whom he had so high a veneration as to consult him in his sickness, by any appellation of contempt. Whoever considers what troublesome and destructive

A. M. Ekron †, to know if he should recover; but, by God's appointment, the Prophet Elijah was sent to meet his messengers,
 3001, etc. Ant. Chris. 1003, etc.

from
 1 Kings viii.
 to the end
 of 2 Chron.

tive creatures (especially in some hot countries) flies are known to be; in what vast swarms they sometimes settle, and not only devour all the fruits of the earth, but occasion a noisome pestilence; may reasonably suppose, that the Heathens had a proper deity to whom they had their addressees, either for the prevention or removal of this sore plague. And accordingly we are told by Pliny, (*lib. 29. c. 6.*) that, when there was a plague in Africa, occasioned by vast quantities of flies, after that the people had sacrificed to the god Achore, (he should have said the god of Ekron, for there is a plain affinity between their names), the flies all died, and the distemper was extinguished. Now, it was a known maxim of the Heathen theology, that as all plagues were inflicted by some evil dæmon or other, so all evil dæmons were under the restraint of some superiour one, who is their prince and ruler. As therefore Pluto was known to be the god of hell, and to have all the mischievous band of spirits under his controul, to him the Heathens used to pray, and offer sacrifices, that he might not suffer any of his inferiour agents to inflict this heavy judgment upon them. They worshipped him, I say, not to engage him to do them any good, but to prevail with him to do them no harm; and accordingly we may observe, that every thing in their service was dark and gloomy. Their offerings were in the night:

Tum regi Stygio nocturnas inchoat aras. Virg. *Æn.* vi.
 Their victims were black:

—————Hunc casta Sybilla

Nigrantum multo pecundum te sanguine ducet. Ib. *Æn.* vi.
 And the blood let out into a deep ditch:

—————Cultros in guttera velleris atri

Conjicit, et patulas perfundat sanguine fossas,

Ovid. *Met.* lib. vii.

Such good reason have we to think, that the Baalzebub, in Scripture, called *the prince of the devils*, was the very same with the Pluto whom the Heathens made the god of hell, and worshipped in this manner; *Patrick's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*; and *Jurieu Hist. des degres et cultes, part iv. c. 3. &c.*

† Ekron was a city and government of the Philistines, which fell by lot to the tribe of Judah, in the first division made by Joshua, Josh. xv. 45.; but was afterwards given up to the tribe of Dan, Josh. xix. 43.; tho' it does not appear from history, that the Jews ever had a peaceable possession of it. It was situated near the Mediterranean sea, between Ashdod and Jamnia, in a moist and

gers, and † to turn them back with this answer, that the king should certainly die. The messengers coming back much sooner than was expected, acquainted the king with the reason of it; and he, * by their description, understanding that it was Elijah who sent him this message, immediately dispatched a captain with fifty soldiers to apprehend him; but, upon their approach, the prophet commanded fire to come down from heaven, and destroy them. The like he did to another captain, and his company; but when the third came in a more submissive manner, and begged his life, and the lives of his soldiers, † Elijah went with him to the king, and told him from his own mouth, what

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii,
to the end
of 2 Chron.

and hot foil, and was therefore very much infested with flies; *Calmet's Dictionary*; and *Patrick's Commentary*.

† It may seem somewhat strange, that Ahaziah's messengers should stop their journey to Ekron, at Elijah's command; but he was a man of such a venerable presence, and spake to them with such authority in the name of the Lord, that they were overawed thereby to obey him rather than the king; *Patrick's Commentary*.

* The description which the messengers give of Elijah is,—*That he was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins*, 2 Kings i. 8.; where his being an hairy man, may either denote his wearing long hair on his head, and his beard, as the ancient Greek philosophers were wont to do, and as Lucan describes Cato,

Intensos rigidam in frontem descendere canos

Passus erat, mœstamque genis increfcere barbam.

Or it may denote his habit, which was made of skins, rough, and with their hair on; as the ancient heroes were cloathed in the skins of lions, tigers, and bears; as the Evangelist represents the Baptist in a raiment of camels hair, Mat. iii. 4. as the apostle describes the prophets wandering about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, Heb. xi. 37.; and as Statius dresses up old Tiresius,

longævatis opacos

Tiresiæ vultus, vocemque et vellera nota

Induitur.

Theb. lib. ii.

† This is a great instance of the prophet's faith and obedience to God, in whom he trusted, that he would deliver him from the wrath of the king, and the malice of Jezebel. He had ordered, not long before, all the prophets of Baal to be slain; had sent a very unwelcome message to the King; and now made a very terrible execution upon two of his captains, and

A. M. 3001, &c.
 Ant. Christ.
 1003; &c.
 from
 1 Kings viii.
 to the end
 of 2 Chron.
 Elijah's
 translation
 and Elisha's
 succession in
 the prophetic
 office.

what he had before told the messengers; which accordingly came to pass; for he died a short time after, and having no son of his own, was, || in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, succeeded by his brother Jehoram.

About the beginning of the † reign of Jehoram king of Judah, Elijah the prophet was translated into heaven, God,

their companies; so that he had all the reason in the world to apprehend the utmost expressions of the king's displeasure: And yet, when God commands him, he makes no manner of hesitation but goes boldly to him, and confirms with his own mouth the ungrateful truth which he had declared to his messengers; *Patrick's Commentary.*

|| How could Jehoram, the brother of Ahaziah, begin his reign in Israel in the second year of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, when we read soon after, that he began to reign over Israel in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, 2 Kings iii. 1.; and in another place, that Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, began to reign over Judah, in the fifth year of Jehoram king of Israel? 2 Kings viii. 16. Now, it is but supposing, that Jehoshaphat declared his son Jehoram king, while himself was alive, and reigned in conjunction with him for the space of seven years, and all the difficulty is removed: For then Jehoram the son of Ahab, might begin his reign in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, viz in the second year that he reigned with his father, who was then alive; and Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, may be said to have begun his reign in the fifth of Jehoram the son of Ahab, meaning the time when, after his father's death, he began to reign alone. That the kings of Judah and Israel (as well as other oriental princes) were accustomed to appoint their successors, and, even during their lifetime, to give them some share in the administration, is plain from several instances: And that Jehoshaphat found it expedient to settle his son in the kingdom with himself, seems to be intimated in 2 Chron. xxi. 3. where it is said, that *he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was his first-born, and gave gifts to the rest of his sons*, who, being many, might perhaps be forming parties, and be entering into cabals about the succession to the kingdom; and therefore, to put an end to all such contests, Jehoshaphat declared Jehoram king, while himself was on the throne, because he was his first-born; *Calmet's and Patrick's Comment.*

† To prevent confusion, the reader is desired to take notice, that, in the course of this history, there is mention made of two Jehorams, who reigned much about the same time; one the

God, very likely, had given him some intimation of the time when this miraculous event should happen; and therefore, before his departure, he visited the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel and Jericho, and took his leave of them with such solemnity, that they began to suspect that this was the last visit he intended to make them; and accordingly † apprised Elisha of it, who thereupon determined not to leave his master, as long as he continued upon earth.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

With this resolution he set forward with Elijah, who was now shaping his course towards his native country of Gilead, from whence he was to be translated; and as they were to pass over the Jordan, Elijah † with his mantle struck the waters, which instantly divided into two parts, so that they went over on dry ground.

When they had passed the river in the sight of fifty of the second son of Ahab, who succeeded his brother Ahaziah, and was king of Israel; and the other, who was son and heir to Jehoshaphat, and reigned in Judah; both very wicked princes; and therefore the greater care should be taken, that their actions be not blended together.

† The expression in the text is, — *Knowest thou, that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to day?* 2 Kings ii 3. where the sons of the prophets allude to their manner of sitting in their schools. For the scholars used to sit below their masters feet, and the master's above over their heads, when they taught them: And therefore the sense of the words is, that *God would deprive Elisha of his master Elijah's instructions, viz. by a sudden death.* For it does not appear that they had any notion of his translation; so far from this, that they desired leave to send out some to seek for him, if peradventure the spirit of the Lord had taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley, 2 Kings ii. 16.; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† In these two books of Kings, there is mention made five times of this mantle; and in every place it is called *Adareth*, which denotes a royal as well as a prophetic robe. The Septuagint always translate it by the word *μελωτήν*, which properly signifies the prophetic mantle, made of lamb-skins, being a kind of upper garment thrown over the shoulders, and, as some think, reaching down to the heels; though others take it for no more than a leathern jacket to keep out rain.

Ad subitas nusquam scortea desit aquas. Mart. lib. 14.

A. M. 3001, &c. Ant. Christ. 1007, &c. from 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

the † sons of the prophets, and as they drew near to the place of Elijah's ascension; Elisha requested of him, that the same gift of prophecy which God had been pleased to bestow on him, might be † communicated to him, in a larger measure than to the other prophets; which the other did not positively promise, but told him however, that if he happened to see him when he came to be translated, this would be a good sign that God would not refuse him his request: And while they were thus going on,

† By *the sons of the prophets*, we are to understand *the scholars of the prophets*, such as they educated and trained up in religion and virtue, upon whom God by degrees bestowed the spirit of prophecy, and whom the superior prophets employed in the same capacity, as the apostles did the evangelists, *viz.* to publish their prophecies and instructions to the people, in the places where they themselves could not go. Nor is it any small testimony of God's love to an apostate people, that in these corrupt times, and in that very place where the golden calves were worshipped, he still continued the schools of the prophets, in order to recover them from idolatry. Nay, what is very remarkable, there were prophets of greater excellency for their miracles in Israel, than were in Judah, because they needed them more, both to turn their hard hearts from the worship of idols, and to preserve the pious persons that remained among them from deserting their religion; *Patrick's Commentary.*

† The words in the text are, — *Let, I pray thee, a double portion of thy spirit be upon me*; where some learned men are of opinion, that this request in Elisha would be arrogant, if the words were to be taken in their most obvious sense; and therefore they refer them to Elisha's school-fellows, whom he desires to surpass in all prophetic gifts, as much as the first-born did excel the other children in his portion of the inheritance. But seeing Elijah had no other successor upon whom he was to bestow any prophetic gifts, but Elisha, we cannot see why Elisha may not be said to have a double portion of the prophetic spirit, since it is evident he did many more miracles than Elijah did, and, even after his death, exerted a divine power in raising the dead man, 2 Kings xiii. 21. Had he desired this double portion indeed out of a principle of vain glory, there might then be something said against his request; but since he did it with a pure intent to become thereby more serviceable in his generation, we cannot perceive why he was to blame in requesting what our blessed Saviour granted to his apostles, *viz.* the power of working greater miracles than he himself did; *Le Clerc's and Calmet's Commentaries.*

and

and talking, there appeared, as it were, a bright chariot, and horses, running towards them on the ground, and, coming between them, parted them. * For Elijah mounted the chariot, and, in a great gust of wind, directed by angels, was transported into heaven; while Elisha, who was left behind, † cried to him, as he saw him mount, and expressed his sorrow when he was gone: But taking up the mantle, which had dropt from him in his ascent with it, he divided the waters, as Elijah had done, and repassed the Jordan.

A. M.
3007, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2. Chron.

* What this chariot was, and to what place it conveyed Elijah we shall have occasion to observe in the following dissertation; at present we shall only take notice of some things relating to this prophet's character. The author of Ecclesiasticus (chap. xlviii. 1, &c.) has dedicated this encomium to his memory.—*Then stood up Elias the prophet, as fire, and his word burnt like a lamp. He brought a sore famine among them, and by his zeal he diminished their number. By the word of the Lord he shut up the heaven, and also three times brought down fire. O Elias, how wast thou honoured by thy wondrous deeds? And who may glory like unto thee? Who didst raise a dead man from death, and his soul from the place of the dead, by the word of the Most High; who broughtest kings to destruction, and honourable men to their bed:—Who wast taken up in a whirlwind of fire, and in a chariot of fiery horses; who wast ordained for reproofs in their times, to pacify the wrath of the Lord's judgment, before it brake forth into fury; to turn the heart of the father to the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob.* In which last sentence our author alludes to that passage in Malachi, chap. iv. 5, 6. *Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.*

† The words of Elisha upon this occasion are, *My father, my father,* (so they called their masters and instructors), *the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.* The expression alludes to the form of the chariot and horses that he had just then beheld, and seems to imply, “That Elijah, by his example, and counsel, and prayers, and power with God, did more for the defence and preservation of Israel, than all their chariots and horses, and other warlike provisions;” unless we may suppose, that this was an abrupt speech, which Elisha, in the consternation he was in, left unfinished, and so the sacred history has recorded it; *Pool's Annotations;* and *Le Clerc's Commentary.*

Hereby

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

Hereby the prophets of Jericho; and the places adjacent, were convinced that the spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha. And accordingly, when they met him, they recognised him for his successor, and paid him the same respect. Believing however, that the Spirit of God might possibly have * transported Elijah into some distant or desert place, they desired leave to send out fifty men in search of him. Elisha assured them, that it would be needless: However, to give them all the conviction they desired, he suffered them to do what they pleased; so that the men went and returned again after three days search to no purpose.

From this place Elisha proceeded to Jericho, where, at the request of the inhabitants, he cured the † brackishness of their water, and the barrenness of their soil. Thence he continued his course to Bethel, where, upon the children's

* *The Spirit of the Lord*, (whereby we may understand either the power of God, or some one of his angels), frequently used to carry the prophets through the air, and, with vast celerity, remove them to distant places: And therefore Obadiah speaks of it as a common thing; *And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord will carry thee where I know not, so that when the king cannot find thee, he will slay me*, 1 Kings xviii. 12. And accordingly, in the New Testament, we are told of Philip, that *when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught him away, that the eunuch saw him no more, and Philip was found at Azotus*, Acts viii. 39, 40; *Le Clerc's Commentary*.

† The manner in which the prophet Elisha sweetened the fountain, and made the soil fruitful, was by casting salt into the water, to make the miracle more conspicuous; for salt is a thing, that, of all others, makes water less potable, and the ground more barren. Josephus, however, willing to improve upon this history, adds (as his usual manner is) several circumstances of his own. For he tells us,—"That this fountain did not only corrupt the fruits of the earth, (whether grain or plants), but likewise caused abortions in women, and tainted, with a blasted infection, whatever it touched, that was capable of such impression; that Elisha, having been treated with great hospitality and respect by the people of Jericho, bethought himself of such an acknowledgment, as they themselves, their country, and their posterity, to the end of the world, might be the better for; " that

children's mocking and ridiculing him, † two she-bears A. M. 3001, &c. Ant. Christ. 1003, &c. from 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron. rushing out of the neighbouring forest, fell upon them, and devoured two and forty of them. From Bethel he went to mount Carmel, where probably there was another school of the prophets; and from thence he proceeded to Samaria, where he had soon opportunities enough of exerting his prophetic office.

It was in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat King of Judah, that this Jehoram King of Israel began to reign; Jehoram's victory over Mesha King of Moab, and though he did not make any great reformation in his kingdom, yet he was not altogether as wicked as his father and brother: For he † removed the idols of Baal, (very likely to procure Jehoshaphat's friendship), though the golden calves (which were the state engine to keep up the division between Israel and Judah) he could not prevail with

“ that hereupon he went out to the fountain, and causing a pitcher
“ of salt to be let down to the bottom of it, he advanced his right
“ hand towards heaven, and, presenting his oblations at the side of
“ it, besought God, in his goodness, to correct the water, and to
“ sweeten the veins through which it passed; to soften the air, and
“ to make it more temperate and fructifying; to bestow chil-
“ dren, as well as fruits, upon the inhabitants in abundance; and
“ never to withdraw these blessings, so long as they continued
“ in their duty; and that, upon offering up this prayer, with all due
“ ceremony, and according to form, the ill quality of the fountain
“ was changed, and (instead of sterility) became now an efficacious
“ means of plenty and increase.” The author, we may observe,
(to gratify the Pagans), represents Elisha in the form of a magician,
who, by invocations, oblations, and other mysterious operations,
changed the bad quality of the waters, and thereby made the val-
ley of Jericho fruitful; whereas this was done in a manner altoge-
ther supernatural and miraculous. Nay, to this very day there is a
fountain on the west of Jericho, which rises about three quarters of
a league above the town, in the way to Jerusalem, which yielding
a great deal of water, (and that very good in its kind), runs along
and fructifies the plain; *The wars of the Jews, lib. v. c. 4.*

† They had probably been robbed of their whelps, which made them more fierce and outrageous; *Patrick's Commentaries.*

† It is a little strange, that his mother Jezebel, who brought this worship with her from the Sidonians, should suffer him to remove the images of her favourite god; but she perhaps might be a little daunted with the many disasters that had befallen her family, and was content with the privilege of having her

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with himself to depose. In this state, however, he † had Jehoshaphat for an ally, when he engaged in a war (which was in the beginning of his reign) with Mesha King of Moab, for refusing to pay the tribute † of an hundred thousand

her idolatrous worship in private; nor is it unlikely, that Jehoshaphat might refuse to assist him in his wars against the king of Moab, unless he would consent to renounce his idolatry; *Patrick's Commentary*.

† The answer which he gives Jehoram is the very same that he returned to his father Ahab in his war against the Syrians: *I am, as thou art; my people, as thy people; and my horses, as thy horses*, 1 Kings xxii. 4, and 2 Kings iii. 7. And, considering the ill success he had, one would wonder why he should be so forward to join with his son; but, as Jehoram had reformed some things, he might have a better opinion of him, and by shewing him kindness, hope perhaps to prevail with him to proceed farther; and, as the Moabites had of late invaded his country, 2 Chron. xx. 1. he might embrace this opportunity to chastise them for it. But without these considerations, the war was right and justifiable; and fit it was, that rebels and revolters should be chastised, lest the example should pass into his own dominions, and encourage the Edomites to revolt from him, as we find they afterwards did from his son; *Patrick's Commentary* and *Pool's Annotations*.

† This was a prodigious number indeed; but then we are to consider that these countries abound with sheep, insomuch, that Solomon offered an hundred and twenty thousand, at the dedication of the temple, 2 Chron. vii. 5. and the Reubenites drove from the Hagarites two hundred and fifty thousand. 1 Chron. v. 21. For, as Bochart observes, their sheep frequently brought forth two at a time, and sometimes twice a-year. The same learned man remarks, that, in ancient times, when people's riches consisted in cattle, this was the only way of paying tribute; for, (as he quotes the passage out of Pliny), *Pecunia ipsa a pecore, appellabatur: Etiam nunc in Tabulis Censoriis pascua dicuntur omnia, ex quibus populus reditus habet, quia diu hoc solum vestigal fuerat*; Nat. Hist. lib. 18. c. 3. It is observed by others likewise, that this great number of cattle was not a tribute which the Moabites were obliged to pay to the Israelites every year, but on some special occasion only; upon the accession of every new king, for instance, when they were obliged to express their homage in this manner, or to make satisfaction for some damages, that the Israelites should at any time suffer from their invasions or revolts; *Patrick's and Le Clerk's Commentaries*.

lambs,

lambs, and an hundred thousand rams with the wool, which (until the reign of his brother Ahaziah) had been all along from the time of David, paid to the crown of Israel; and as the King of Edom was then no more than deputy to Jehoshaphat, he engaged him likewise in the quarrel. These three kings, in order to surprise the enemy, and invade him on the weakest side, took a compass of seven days march in the wilderness of Edom, and had like to have been all lost for want of water, had not the prophet Elisha, who was then in the camp, (b) put them on a method how to procure some; and not only so, but at the same time, promised them a complete victory over the Moabites. The next morning, the confederate army had water enough; and the Moabites, who were now marching to oppose them, perceiving water where they knew there used to be none, and by the reflection of the sun, that it looked like blood, supposed that the three kings had quarrelled, and their armies engaged, and slain one another; so that they concluded they had nothing to do, but to fall upon the spoil. But when they came to the camp, the Israelites gave them a reception that they little expected: For they not only killed great numbers of them upon the spot, but pursued them into their country, destroyed their fortified places, choaked up their springs, cut down their timber, and made ravage and devastation wherever they came; insomuch, that the king was forced to betake himself to his capital city Kirharseth, where the confederate army besieged him, and soon reduced him to such extremity, that after he had made a successful sally with seven hundred men, in hopes of forcing the King of Edom's quarters, and found himself repulsed, he took his eldest son, † and in

A. M.
3003, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end.
of 2 Chron.

mere

(b) 2 Kings iii. 16.

† Not only the holy Scriptures, but several Heathen writers likewise, do assure us of this, that in cases of great extremity, it was customary among people to sacrifice to their gods whatever was most dear to them. Cæsar, in his war with the Gauls, tells us, that when they were afflicted with grievous diseases, or in time of war, or great danger, they either offered men for sacrifices, or vowed that they would offer them; because they imagined, that their gods could never be appeased, unless one man's life was given for another's. no less a man than Grotius, is of opinion, that this Moabitish king in imitation of Abraham, sacrificed his son to the God of Israel, hoping thereby to appease his wrath, and to move the compassion of the kings that were besieging him: But the most general opinion

A. M. 3001, etc. Ant. Chris. 1003, &c. mere desperation, sacrificed him upon the wall of the city in the sight of the Israelitish army, who, being struck with horror at so barbarous an action, raised the siege, and returned to their own country.

1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron. Elishah's several miracles. Upon raising this siege, the prophet Elisha left the three kings, and returned to Samaria; whereupon the sacred historian gives a long detail of the several miracles which he wrought: viz. (c) That he increased a poor widow's oil, to such a quantity, as enabled her to pay her husband's debts, and preserve † her two sons from bondage: (d) That to reward the wealthy Shunamite for his kindness and hospitality to him, he prevailed, in his prayers with God, that his wife might have a child, and afterwards, when the child died, (e) restored him to life again: That while he was at Gilgal, he cured the noxious quality of the prophets † colloquintida pottage, by the injection of a little

is, that he offered this costly sacrifice to some false deity, and very likely to Chemosh, which was his national god, and generally thought to be the sun; *Calmet's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

(c) 2 Kings iv. 1. &c.

† The Jewish law looked upon children as the proper goods of their parents, who had power to sell them for seven years, as their creditors had to compel them to do it in order to pay their debts; and from the Jews this custom was propagated to the Athenians, and from them to the Romans. The Romans indeed had the most absolute controul over their children. By the decree of Romulus they could imprison, beat, kill, or sell them for slaves. But Numa Pompilius first moderated this, and the Emperor Dioclesian made a law, that no free person should be sold upon account of debt. The ancient Athenians had the like jurisdiction over their children; but Solon reformed this cruel custom: As indeed it seemed a little hard, that the children of a poor man, who have no manner of inheritance left them, should be compelled into slavery, in order to pay their deceased father's debts: And yet this was the custom, as appears from this passage, wherein the prophet does not pretend to reprove the creditor, but only puts the woman on a method to pay him; *Calmet's* and *Le Clerc's Commentaries*.

(d) 2 Kings iv. 8. &c. (e) Ibid. ver. 34.

† It is a plant so very bitter, that some have called it the gall of the whole earth. It purges excessively, and is a sort of poison, if not qualified, and taken in a moderate quantity; *Calmet's* and *Patrick's Commentaries*.

meal :

meal : (f) That there he multiplied twenty barley loaves, and satisfied above an hundred persons with them ; and (g) that there he made an ax, which was fallen into the river, merely by throwing in a stick, rise up, and swim upon the surface of it : But the miracle which the sacred history more particularly insists on, is the cure of Naaman's leprosy.

Naaman was general of the king of Syria's troops, a man famous for exploits in war, and in great esteem with his master ; but he was a leper. At this time there seems to have been no good understanding between the two crowns : and yet the king of Syria, to recover so valuable a servant from his illness, wrote to the king of Israel, but in such terms, as gave him some uneasy apprehensions. When Elisha understood this, he ordered that Naaman might be sent to him ; and when he came with all his attendants and stately equipage, instead of receiving him in form, † he sent his servant out to him and bad him go † dip himself seven times in the river Jordan, and he would be cured. The proud Syrian, not understanding this treatment, and expecting, very likely, that the prophet, by some personal act, would have performed the cure, thought himself

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
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of 2 Chron.
That of curing Naaman's leprosy more especially

(f) 2 Kings iv. 41.

(g) Ibid. vi. 5, 6.

† Elisha's not appearing to receive the Syrian general, is ascribed by some to the retired course of life which the prophets led ; but then, why did he see him, and enter into conversation with him, when he returned from his cure ? I should rather think, that it was not misbecoming the prophet, upon this occasion, to take some state upon him, and to support the character and dignity of a prophet of the Most High God ; especially since this might be a means to raise the honour of his religion and ministry, and to give Naaman a right-er idea of his miraculous cure, when he found that it was neither by the prayer nor presence of the prophet, but by the divine power and goodness that it was effected ; *Pool's Annotations* ; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† In conformity to the law, which requires that lepers, in order to their cleansing, should be sprinkled *seven times*, Lev. xiv. 7. &c. the prophet ordered Naaman to dip himself as often ; but Jordan, (as the Syrian argued) had no more virtue in it than other rivers ; nor could cold water (of any kind) be a proper means for curing this distemper, whose root is a white waterish humour, that would increase, rather than be diminished by any such application ; *Patrick's Commentary*.

A. M.
3001, etc.
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flighted, and was for returning home : But being advised by those that were about him, that since the prescription was so easy, to make the experiment at least would not be much, he went to the river, and, after having bathed seven times therein, found himself perfectly cured.

Rejoiced at his unexpected recovery, Naaman returned to Elisha, acknowledging, that there was no other God but the God of Israel ; protesting, that from thence forward he would sacrifice to none but him ; desiring, for that purpose, two mules loads † of the earth of the country, wherewith to build him an altar ; deprecating any offence, that might arise from his waiting on the king, his master, when he went to worship in the temple of † Rimmon ; and, in the conclusion, importuning the prophet to accept

† He desired the earth of the land, because he thought it more holy and acceptable to God, and proper for his service ; or because he would, by this token, declare his conjunction with the people of Israel in the true worship, and constantly put himself in mind of his great obligation to that God from whose land this earth was taken. He might indeed have had enough of this earth without asking any one for it ; but he desired the prophet to give it him, as believing, perhaps, that he who put such virtue into the waters of Israel, could put as much in the earth thereof, and make it as useful and beneficial to him in another way. These thoughts indeed were groundless, and extravagant, but yet were excuseable in an Heathen and novice, that was not as yet sufficiently instructed in the true religion ; *Pool's Annotations.*

† It is thought by the generality of interpreters, that as the Syrians were great worshippers of the Sun, this god is the same ; and that the name *Rimmon*, or *high*, is given him by reason of his elevation. Grotius takes it for Saturn, because that planet is the highest of all ; and Selden will have it to be the same with Elion, or the most high god of the Phœnicians. It is certain, that the word *Rimmon* is the name that the Syrians give to pomegranates ; and therefore, as their country was full of pomegranate-trees, whose fruit is not only of a delicious taste, but of great use likewise on account of the excellent liquor which it produces, they gave perhaps the name of *pomegranate* to their god, in the same manner that the Greeks and Latins gave that of Ceres to the goddess of corn ; *Lamy's Introduction, lib. iii. c. 1.* ; and *Jurieu Hist. des dogmes et cultes, part iv. c. 10.*

of a present, for the great cure that he had wrought upon him, which the other most † positively refused.

But there was not the like disinterestedness in his servant Gehazi. He, thinking it unreasonable that so potent and wealthy a person should go off without paying for so signal a benefit, resolved to get something for himself; and therefore, unknown to any body, as he thought, he followed after Naaman, and having soon overtaken him, forged a lie, that his master desired of the general to send him a talent of silver, and two changes of garments, for two sons of the prophets, who, since his departure, were come to visit him. The general was glad of this opportunity to oblige his master; and therefore pressed him to take two talents of silver with the garments, and sent two of his servants to carry them for him; from whom he received them before he came to his master's house, and repositied them, as he thought, in a safe place: But no sooner did he return into his master's presence, than he began to tax him with what he had been doing, which, when Gehazi denied, he † denounced his sentence, viz. that the leprosy whereof he had cured Naaman should adhere to him and his family for ever; which accordingly, that very moment, came to pass.

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3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
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† Elisha did not think it a thing simply unlawful to receive gifts or presents; for we find him receiving them upon another occasion, 2 Kings iv. 41.; but he did not hold it expedient, in his present circumstances, to do it, because he thought it would make for the honour of the true God and religion, to let the Syrians see the generous piety, charity, and kindness of his ministers and servants, and how much they despised all that worldly wealth and glory, which the priests or prophets of the Gentiles so greedily sought after; that thereby Naaman might be confirmed in the religion he had embraced, and others, in like manner, incited to a love and liking of it; *Pool's Annotations.*

† And justly did he deserve it, since his crime had in it all these aggravations,—a greedy covetousness, which is idolatry; a profanation of God's name; a downright theft, in keeping that to himself, which was given for others; deliberate and impudent lying; a desperate contempt of God's omniscience, justice, and holiness; an horrible reproach cast upon the prophet, and his religion; and a pernicious scandal given to Naaman, and every other Syrian that should chance to hear of it; *Pool's Annotations.*

The

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
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The OBJECTION.

“ **BUT** how wicked soever Gehazi might be, in purloining a little of Naaman’s money, and making the man pay for his cure ; yet his master, methinks, carries the compliment a little too far, if not in refusing his present, at least in giving him toleration to continue in idolatry. He had now the fairest opportunity imaginable to make him a thorough convert, and by working so great a miracle upon him, had acquired a proper authority to prescribe to him what he pleased : But when, instead of confirming him in the service of the true God, he permits him to go on in his old practice of *bowing himself in the house of Rimmon*, and to comply with the terms of a false religion, rather than lose an advantageous employ, he certainly discovers too great an indulgence to Naaman’s impiety, and too small a concern for the honour of God’s true religion and worship.

“ Naaman, no doubt, had a great and honourable post about the King of Syria ; but what is this to the purpose ? Had he been a true convert to the Jewish religion, or had the prophet taken care to instruct him sufficiently in the rudiments thereof, all his riches and honours, all his offices and employments, nay, even life itself, he should have freely given up, rather than appear in the posture of a suppliant before an idol, which he professed to despise, or gratify the greatest monarch upon earth, by so base a prostitution of his conscience ; unless we can suppose, (what their speeches indeed seem to import), that whether he served God or Rimmon, both he and the prophet esteemed it a thing indifferent.

“ This prophet, indeed, in his own cause, is known to have been more zealous than he was in God’s ; otherwise (*b*) he would not have cursed so many *little children in the name of the Lord*, and (what is wonderful) upon his cursing, caused two she-bears to come immediately out of the forest, and destroy no less than *two and forty of them* ; though how two bears could *devour* (for that is the expression) so very great a multitude, is somewhat incredible.

(*b*) Christianity as old as the creation, p. 263.

“ But

“ But we need less wonder at this, when we find his predecessor in the prophetic office, animated with the same spirit, and (i) causing fire to come down from heaven to destroy two captains. with their companies, for no other fault, but bluntly delivering a message from the king, and perhaps in the very same words wherein they were commanded to deliver it. A vindictive temper we may perceive our Saviour reproves in his two disciples, (k) James and John, and therefore we are at a loss to know, why God should listen to the prayers of any man, (l) desiring that it should not rain upon the earth for the space of *three years and six months*, when a drought of that continuance must inevitably have destroyed every thing; and when it was sent, not for the punishment of the inhabitants of the land for any particular sin we read of, but purely to aggrandize the prophet, and to put it in his power to say, that there (m) *should be neither dew nor rain in these years, but according to his word.*

“ If the prophet had such interest, and was in such high esteem with Almighty God, we cannot see what reason he had to flee his country, upon the threats of an impotent woman, who, notwithstanding her ascendent over the king, had no power to controul the providence of God, under whose protection, he was so securely placed, that he need not have feared what Jezebel could do unto him. To retreat from danger, when he knew himself under such a safeguard, was acting an inconsistent part, and betraying the cause of God, when (according to his own confession) (n) *he, and he only*, was left to defend it.

“ Moses indeed, as we read, fasted forty nights; but then he was in the mount with God. Our blessed Saviour abstained from all manner of food for the like space of time; but then his human nature was supported by his divine; but it is hard to imagine, how Elijah could travel for forty days and nights together, with no stronger sustenance than a little bread and water, unless we can suppose, that the kind ravens that attended him at the brook Cherith so long, were appointed to wait on him at this

(i) Ibid. 265.
nity, &c. ibid.

(k) Luke ix. 54, 55.
(m) 1 Kings xvii. 1.

(l) Christiani-
(n) Ibid. xix. 10.

A. M. 3601, etc. Ant. Christ. 1003, etc. from 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron.

“ juncture likewise, (n) and to *bring him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening*, all the while that he was upon his journey.

“ The misfortune is, however, that the word *Crebim*, which we render *ravens*, should rather signify *merchants*, who traded in the market of Tyre, or Arabians, that lived in places adjacent to the brook Cherith, and might therefore provide the prophet with necessaries during his concealment; because we cannot conceive, why ravens, and greedy voracious creatures, † unnatural to their own young ones, and unclean by the (o) law, should (of all others) be proper instruments to convey this wonderful food (for wonderful it is from whence they had it) to the prophet in his hiding-place; which Ahab, with all his industry, was not able to find out, it seems, even tho’ (p) *there was not a nation, or kingdom, where he had not sent to seek him*, and yet all the while he was but in the next adjoining province, concealed in the widow of Zarephtha’s house.

“ But badly did Elijah requite God’s singular care and preservation of him, since he was so far from executing the divine command in (q) *anointing Hazael to be King of Syria, and Jehu King of Israel*, that he never once went near them, but left it to be done by his successor Elifha, who himself, in like manner, declined the work, and made a young prophet his proxy. Nay, even in the most plausible act that Elijah did, viz. his destroying the prophets of Baal, there is this exception to be made, viz. that though the law of Moses condemned every one that introduced the worship of false gods to immediate death; yet we cannot see, how either the priests of Baal were bound by that law, or how Elijah, who was but a private man, had any authority to execute it.

(n) Ibid. xvii. 6.

† Such is the *asotologia*, or want of natural love of these creatures to their young ones, that, as naturalists report, they forsake them before they are fledged; but the providence of God takes care to feed them with worms, which are produced by the dung, and out of the carcasses that have been brought into their nests, till they be able to fly and provide for themselves: and to this the Psalmist, speaking of God, *who feedeth the young ravens, when they call upon him*, seems to allude; Mat. cxlvii. 9.

(o) Lev. xi. 15. (p) 1 Kings xviii. 10. (q) 1 Kings xix. 15.

“ The

“ The truth is, (r) they could not but know, that their
 “ god Baal was utterly unable to send down fire from hea-
 “ ven to consume their sacrifice: and therefore, if they
 “ suffered, they suffered like a pack of fools, for accepting
 “ a challenge which they were conscious they could not an-
 “ swer, and putting the merits of their cause upon an un-
 “ necessary trial, wherein, without all peradventure, they
 “ were sure to miscarry.

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 3001, &c.
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“ But how ridiculous soever the sacred history may make
 “ the prophets of Baal, it should not use the same freedom
 “ in exhibiting the actions of God in an unfair light; and
 “ yet this it does, when it makes the searcher of all hearts
 “ relent, and (s) suspend the execution of Ahab’s sentence,
 “ upon the account of his repentance, which (how soon al-
 “ soever it might appear) was, at the bottom, but false and
 “ fictitious. This it does, when it makes the disposer of
 “ all events (t) send a lion to slay a man, merely for refu-
 “ sing to wound one of the sons of the prophets, though he
 “ does not declare for what reason he requested that in-
 “ human favour of him. This it does, when it makes the
 “ great dispenser of all justice punish the children of Hiel
 “ for their father’s profaneness in rebuilding Jericho, tho’
 “ it be contrary to his own declarations, that children shall
 “ not suffer for the wickedness of their parents, (u) but
 “ every one die for his own iniquity. This it does, lastly,
 “ when it makes the fountain of all purity and truth (x)
 “ hold conference with an evil and deceitful spirit, and en-
 “ ter into its measures of deluding Ahab; to go to the siege
 “ of Ramoth-Gilead, which was to his bane.

“ But, besides these grosser absurdities, there are some
 “ other passages, in this period of history, which seem de-
 “ stitute of the common appearances of probability; as
 “ that Jehoshaphat should send out itinerent preachers, to
 “ instruct the people in their duty, when, in every city of
 “ the Levites (which were dispersed over the whole nation)
 “ there were people appointed for that purpose: That the
 “ same Jehoshaphat, who had but a small part of the king-
 “ dom which David enjoyed, should so far surpass him in
 “ the number of his forces, as to have under his command

(r) Le Clerc’s Commentary. (s) 1 Kings xxi. 29. (t) Ibid.
 xx. 36. (u) Jer. xxxi. 30. (x) 2 Chron. ii. 19, 20.

A. M. 3001, etc. Ant. Chris. 2003, etc. from 1 Kings viii. to the end. of 2 Chron. “ an army of eleven hundred and sixty thousand men, without reckoning the garrisons that were in their strong holds: And, lastly, that the wall of the city of Apheck (how spacious soever it may be supposed) should, by its fall, be able to bury in its ruins no less (y) than seven and twenty thousand men; which is enough to stagger all human faith.”

Answered by showing the sense of Elifha's answer.

The most material part of the discourse which passed between Naaman and Elifha, is delivered in these words:—

(z) *Thy servant (says Naaman) will henceforth offer neither burnt-offerings nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord: in this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that, when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing: And Elifha said unto him, Go, in peace. Go in peace,* was a common form of valediction among the Jews, wherewith Elifha might dismiss Naaman, without any further answer to his request, or resolution to his doubt. For the prophet, we must suppose, in this whole transaction, was under the immediate influence and direction of the Spirit of God; and therefore, if the Spirit of God thought proper to withhold any further instruction from the Syrian general, it was not in the prophet's power, though he had *given him his house full of silver and gold,* (a) (as Balaam put the case), *to go beyond the word of the Lord, to do more or less.* Considering then, (b) that Naaman was now in the infancy of his conversion, and as yet not able to receive the higher precepts of perfection; that himself was conscious of his own offence, and wanted not therefore so much to be instructed, as encouraged and strengthened in the Lord: and that the matters wherein he seemed to doubt, were not of such mighty importance, as to concern the essence and foundation of religion; considering these things, I say, we may soon perceive the reason, why *Elifha* accepted of his renunciation of a false, and profession of a true religion, his declared aversion to the worship of idols, and fixed resolution to serve the Lord only, as a sufficient advance in his present circumstances.

Israelites, indeed, and such as were descended from the stock of Jacob, were obliged to the observation of the whole Mosaic law; but strangers and aliens, when

(y) 1 Kings xx. 30. (z) 2 Kings v. 17, 18. (a) Numb. xxii. 18, (b) Pool's Annotations on 2 Kings v. 19.

they came to be admitted profelytes of the gate, were confined only to the worship of the true God, and the practice of such duties as were moral and social : And therefore, when Naaman professed himself a worshipper of the Most High God only, and declared withal, that his attending his master into the temple of Rimmon was not with any religious purpose, but purely in performance of the duty of his office, the prophet had good reason to bid him go in peace, or (as the words may import) to give himself no uneasiness about the matter.

A. M.
3001, &c.
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For, though we pretend not to say with some Rabbinical doctors, that, as Naaman was no Jew, but a foreigner and profelyte only, (c) he was not obliged to abstain from all external worship of idols (as the Jews confessedly were) so long as he continued in another country ; yet it is generally agreed, that we are bound to shew the same respect to our superiours, and those that are set in authority over us, (so long as we do not injure our consciences thereby), in one place as one another ; and (d) that therefore Naaman might very innocently retain his dignity, and high office at court, even as Joseph did in Egypt, and Daniel in Babylon ; might accompany his master into Rimmon's temple, nay, and bow together with him, in compliance to his infirmity or convenience, (who could not so well bow, if the other stood upright), so long as this was a service done to the man, as Tertullian (e) reasons upon the like occasion), and not to the idol ; so long as this was an act purely external, without any of those inward sentiments of respect which constitute the essence of adoration.

And that
Naaman
might inno-
cently at-
tend his
master.

“ This, I own, is the common solution ; but it does not entirely please me. It justifies an action, which Naaman himself was not well satisfied in. It leaves upon the prophet an imputation of too much lenity and indulgence, and upon the general, that of too much hypocrisy and dissimulation. Had Naaman's example, in this sense, been made a precedent, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, and old Eleazar, amidst Antiochus's officers, might have escaped persecution. (f) They, at the sound of the instruments, might have fallen down before the image, not out of any principle of ado-

An objec-
tion against
this solu-
tion.

(c) Grotius *in locum* ; and Selden, *De jure nat. et gent. lib. ii. c. 11.* (d) Calmet's *Dissert. sur la priere que Naaman, &c.* (e) *Vid. De idololat. lib. 16, 17.* (f) Dan. iii. 12.

A. M. 3001, etc. Ant. Chris. 1003, &c. from 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron. “ration, but in pure obedience to the king’s orders; and (g) Eleazar might have evaded the eating of swine’s flesh, if he would but have let it been reported that he did eat it; but we find no such prevarication in either of these; and therefore, we can hardly think that this is the right solution.”

And another offered.

(b) Now, since repentance has regard to what is past, and to ask pardon for an offence already committed is much more natural, than to ask pardon for what we purpose for the future to commit, (which, in matters of morality, is a kind of contradiction), it seems not improbable, that the words should be rendered (as the original will fairly bear it) in the preter tense: *Lord, pardon thy servant, that when my master went into the house of Rimmon, to worship, and he leaned on my hand, and I bowed myself there, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.* For, how great would the incongruity be, if Naaman, who had just before declared his renunciation of idolatry, should now confess his readiness to relapse into the same crime, and desire God’s pardon for it before hand? Whereas to ask pardon for what he had done amiss, and to desire the prophet’s intercession with God in that behalf, argued a mind truly sensible of his former transgression, and very much resolved to avoid it for the future: And accordingly, (i) it is supposed, that, upon his return home, he refused to worship Rimmon any more, and was thereupon dismissed from being general of the king’s forces.

Elifha’s seeing the children justified.

(k) Bethel, we all know, was one of the cities where Jeroboam had set up a golden-calf, a place strangely addicted to idolatry, and whose inhabitants had no small aversion to Elifha, as being the servant and successor of one who had been a professed enemy to their wicked worship, and himself no less an opposer of it. It is reasonable to suppose therefore, that the children, (if they were children, for the word *Naarim* may signify *grown youths* as well), who mocked Elifha, were excited and encouraged thereunto by their parents; and therefore, the judgment was just, in God’s punishing the wickedness of these parents by the death of their children, who, though they suffered in this life, had the happiness to be rescued from the dangers of an idolatrous education, which might have been of fatal tendency both to their present and future state.

(g) Maccab vi. 21. &c. (b) Calmet’s Dissertations. (i) Bedford’s Scripture-chronology, lib. vi. c. 2. (k) Pool’s Annotations in locum.

In the mean time, it must be acknowledged, that the insolence of these mockers (whether we suppose them children or youths) was very provoking, (1) forasmuch as they ridiculed not only a man whose very age commanded reverence, but a prophet likewise, whose character, in all ages, was accounted sacred, nay, and even God himself, whose honour was struck at in the reproaches cast upon his servant; and that too in one of his most glorious and wonderful works, his assumption of Elijah into heaven. For, *Go up, thou bald-head, go up, thou bald-head*, (besides the bitterness of the contempt, expressed in the repetition of the words), shows, that they made a mere jest of any such translation; and therefore, in mere banter, bid Elisha go up, whether, as he pretended, his friend and master was gone before.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii,
to the end
of 2 Chron.

These provocations, one would think, were enough to draw an imprecation from the prophet, but this imprecation did not proceed from any passion, or private resentment of his own, but merely from the command and commission of his God; who, for the terrour and caution of other profane persons and idolaters, as well as for the maintenance of the honour and authority of his prophets, confirmed the word which had gone out of his servant's mouth.

The like is to be said of the destruction which Elijah called down from heaven, upon the two captains, and their companies, who came to apprehend him; that he did this, not out of any hasty passion or revenge, but purely in obedience to the Holy Spirit wherewith he was animated, and in zeal for the honour and glory of God, which, in the person of his prophet, were grossly abused.

And Elijah's
slaying the
captains
and their
companies.

The officers that were sent to him, call him indeed a man of God; but, by the answer which the prophet returned, we may learn, that they called him so only by way of contempt and derision. (m) As they could not be ignorant, however, that Ahaziah was highly offended at Elijah, and had sent them for no other purpose, but to bring him to punishment (n) for having denounced his death; if they thought proper to obey the king in such unrighteous proceedings, rather than the laws of nature and religion, which forbid us to be instruments in cruelty and wrong, they deserved the fate they met with: And our blessed

(1) Pool's Annotations *in locum*. (m) Le Clerc's Commentaries *in locum*. (n) 2 Kings i. 4.

A. M. Saviour does not blame Elijah's conduct in this respect, but his disciples only, for their perverse imitation of it, from a spirit of resentment and revenge, and under a trivial provocation, in comparison of what was offered to the prophet. The truth is, God, in this instance of severity, hath taught us, that he will have his prophets revered, (o) because they are allied to him, and every affront put upon them he resents as an indignity to himself; and therefore the sad end of the two captains, and their companies, who came to apprehend the prophet of the Lord, was designed monumentally to deter future ages from the like provocations; and to remind us of the precept which God himself hath given us, (p) *Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*

In what sense Elijah hindered it from raining. “ (q) *O! Elijah, (says the author of Ecclesiasticus,) how wast thou honoured in thy wondrous deeds, and who may glory like unto thee?* Like thee, (r) who wast vouchsafed the sight of God's glorious and majestic presence; (s) who hadst angels sent to comfort and refresh thee, when thou wast weary; (t) who hadst fire sent thee from heaven, to avenge thee of thine enemies, when they came to insult thee; (u) who hadst thy body, in a bright chariot, translated into heaven, without undergoing the fate of mortals; and (what was not the least of thy prerogatives, who hadst, (x) whilst thou lived, the power of locking or unlocking the storehouses of heaven at thy pleasure, and by thy prayers.” It was doubtless, to magnify his office, (which now began to be depreciated not a little), that God had authorised his prophet to accost Ahab with such marvellous assurance, as if the dispensation of the rain and dew of heaven, for such a determinate time, had been entirely at his disposal: But we mistake the matter widely, if we suppose, that the prophet had any part (farther than he was God's minister and messenger to declare the thing) in bringing this famine upon the land. All judgments of this kind are the immediate work of God: And, (y) *as he does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*; so, if we will but turn to (z) the preceding chapter, we shall find an account of such

(o) Scripture vindicated, part ii. p. 124. (p) 1 Chron. xvi. 22. (q) Eccles. xlviii. 4. (r) 1 Kings xix. (s) 1 Kings xix. 5. (t) 2 Kings i. 10. &c. (u) Ibid. ii. 11. (x) 1 Kings xvii. 1. (y) Lament. iii. 33. (z) Ibid. ii.

open and avowed idolatry, and such bold contempt of the divine authority, both in the prince and people, as will sufficiently justify the severity of God in bringing this national judgment upon them. For well may the people be supposed to be generally depraved, when we find it recorded of their prince, that (a) *he did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger, than all the kings of Israel that were before him.* A. M. 3001, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1003, etc.
from 1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

We own indeed, that Elijah did not, in every thing, act a consistent part : He, who but lately was so bold and intrepid, as to present himself before Ahab, who had been long in quest of him, in order to make him suffer (b) as the disturber of the public peace, is now frightened at the menaces of a silly woman ; and thereupon quits his country, and flies for his life, notwithstanding the late signal interposition of Providence in his favour. But what shall we say to this ? (c) *Elias was a man subject to the like passions as we are* ; and it was probably, in respect to this his infirmity, that the apostle made this reflection upon him. (d) He knew Jezebel, and that she had all the faults incident to her sex in a superlative degree ; that she was fierce, cruel, vindictive, and implacable ; that, in slaying the priests of Baal, he had incurred her displeasure, and that to revenge herself, she had all the power of the kingdom under her command. These notions ran in his head, and made such an impression upon his spirits, as deprived him of that resolution and manly courage, for which he was heretofore so remarkable ; nor was there wanting a wise design of providence, in suffering this timidity to fall upon his servant.

St. Paul tells us of himself, that, (e) *lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, there was given unto him a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet him*, (as he repeats it again), *lest he should be exalted above measure.* And, in like manner, we have reason to believe, that (f) God, upon this occasion, might withdraw that spirit of intrepidity, wherewith, at other times, he fortified Elijah's mind, on purpose to shew him his natural imbecility, and the necessity he had, at all times, of the divine assistance ; and on

(a) 1 Kings xvi. 33. (b) Ibid. xviii. 17. (c) James v. 17. (d) Calmet's Commentary on 1 Kings xix. 3. (e) 2 Cor. xii. 7. (f) Calmet's Commentary, and Pool's Annotations.

A. M. 3001, etc. Ant. Christ. 1003, etc. from 1 Kings viii. to the end of 2 Chron. purpose to suppress all the little sentiments of pride and arrogance, that might possibly arise in his breast, upon the contemplation of the gifts and graces which he had bestowed on him, and the many great miracles that were wrought by his hands; and that thereupon, if he did *glory*, he *might glory in the Lord*, and not dare to take any part of his honour to himself.

That he might subsist, upon what he eat and drank, for forty days and nights.

(g) The Jews have made a comparison between Elijah and Moses in several particulars, and given Moses the preference; especially in the matter of his *forty days fast*: For Elijah, they suppose, did every day eat and drink, when he happened to find any sustenance in the wilderness; whereas Moses had nothing to support him, but only the miraculous power of God. The text however is far from intimating that Elijah ate any thing; but what the angel at first brought him; for (h) *he went, in the strength of that meat, forty days, and forty nights, unto Horeb, the mount of God*; whereas, had he taken any nourishment by the way, it had not been by the strength of that food that he performed his journey.

What that food was, the Scripture has taken care to inform us, viz. that it was *simple bread and water*, (to make the miracle more remarkable), but such as was of far greater and more durable virtue than ordinary; and such as gave a life and vigour, far surpassing the effects of any other nourishment. Whether angels, in the celestial state, are purely spiritual, or clothed with some material form, but much more subtle and refined than any we know of here below, is a question much agitated among the schools: But if, for the present, we should allow the affirmative, *the food of angels*, and what may be called the sustenance of their glorious but finite beings, need not be accounted altogether an allegory. It is certain, that upon (i) their appearance in human shape, they did frequently eat the common food of men; that our blessed Saviour, after the assumption of his glorious body, (k) *ate part of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb*; nor may we forget, upon this occasion, his words at the Paschal supper, (l) *I will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom*: All which will be enough to countenance the opinion, that the food which was brought to Elijah at this

(g) Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings xix. 8. (h) Ibid. ver. 8. (i) Gen. xviii. 8. (k) Luke xxiv. 42. (l) Matth. xxvi. 29: time,

time, was of celestial growth and virtue, whereby creatures of a superior excellency may possibly, at certain periods, have their natures renewed, (as the tree of life, in the state of paradise, is supposed to have been intended for that purpose), and to live on to eternal ages. No wonder then, that food of such a rare quality, as to deserve the delegation of an angel from heaven to bring it, should have all the virtue, and all the efficacy, that we read of.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

But waving this speculation, we may suppose the repast to have been nothing more than common bread and water; yet who can doubt, but that God, either by retarding the faculties of concoction and perspiration, or by preserving the spirits and juices from dissipation, might make its strength and nourishment subsist for the time specified? It is but God's speaking the word in this case, and the thing is done. The least beck of his will can make the same meal, that usually serves us for four and twenty hours, support us for forty days, and much longer, if he pleases. That meat of any kind should sustain us for four and twenty hours, (if rightly considered), is a miracle; and that the like proportion should do it for the space of forty days is still but a miracle, and with the same facility that God does the one, he can do the other: So true is that observation which our blessed Saviour borrows from Moses, (m) *Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

And indeed no person ever had so large experience of the truth of this observation, as had the prophet now before us, who was so long sustained, not only by the wonderful increase of the widow's oil and meal, but by the daily ministry likewise, and attendance, of ravens. For whatever some may dream of merchants, or Arabians, who might take pity of Elijah in his retirement, and send him provisions every day; besides that the original word (as (n) Bochart has sufficiently evinced) never signifies *merchants*, and that there were no Arabians inhabiting the coasts where Elijah lay concealed, it can hardly be imagined, but that the place of his retreat would have soon been discovered to Ahab, had either merchants, or other inhabitants of the country, been at any time acquainted with it.

Elijah fed,
not by mer-
chants, or
Arabians.

(m) Deut. viii. 3. and Matth. iv. 4. (n) Hieroz. part 2. lib. ii. c. 13.

A. M.
3003, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

How Ahab
might
search for
Elijah every
where, and
he be con-
cealed.

Ravens ve-
ry proper
creatures to
feed Elijah.

What industry that wicked king used to find out the prophet, wherever he absconded, we may learn from the information of good Obadiah, *viz.* that he had ransacked every nation where he could reasonably think that he was concealed, and when he found him not, took an oath of the people, that he was not among them. For (o) though Ahab could not compel other nations to take an oath to that purpose, yet considering the great interest he had among the neighbouring princes, he might easily prevail with the great men of each kingdom, to give him that satisfaction. If we look into his alliances, we shall find, that the king of Tyre was his father-in-law, and the king of Moab tributary to him; that Jehosaphat was his friend and relation, and that the king of Edom was dependent on Jehosaphat; that (p) as the kings of Arabia and Syria corresponded with Solomon, so, very likely, they were confederate with Ahab; that one of their articles might be to deliver up to each other all their fugitive or banished subjects, upon demand; and that this was the foundation of his desire and expectance of this oath: And yet, notwithstanding all this strict and diligent inquiry, Elijah might live concealed in the widow of Zarephtha's house, because he had laid sufficient obligations upon her, both in preserving her from the danger of the famine, and in restoring her dead son to life again; to use all possible care to conceal him. But to return to Elijah's ravens.

Though we should allow that they are creatures voracious and unnatural to their young ones; yet the more unfit instruments they seemed to be, the more they magnified the almighty power of him who controuled their natural appetites while he employed them: (q) And (if there was a moral instruction in it, as St. Chrysostom fancies) the more they might mollify the prophet's heart toward the deluded Israelites, by seeing those very creatures that were cruel to their young, kind to him. Though we should allow, that they were creatures legally unclean, yet (as it was for the meat, and not for the touch, that they were accounted so) this we must grant was a case extraordinary, wherein the ceremonial law was overruled by necessity, and by the lawgiver's dispensation. There is this to be said, however, in defence of God's choice of ravens for this purpose, *viz.* that as they are solitary birds, and delight to

(o) Pool's Annotations on 1 Kings xviii. 10. (p) 1 Kings x. 15, 29. (q) Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings xvii. 6.

live about brooks of water, so are they accustomed to seek out for provisions, and to carry them to the places of their abode; upon which account they were no improper creatures for God to employ upon this service; especially, if what St. Jerom tells us may be credited, viz. that one of these birds brought Paul, the first hermit, half a loaf every day, and when St. Anthony came to visit him, it brought him a whole one, to answer the wants of *these two soldiers of Jesus Christ*, (as (r) he words it); but whence it had this, as well as whence Elijah's ravens had their supply, we pretend not to tell; and had rather acknowledge our ignorance in such like speculations, than take up with uncertain, and sometimes absurd conjectures.

There are two exceptions more, which are generally made to Elijah's conduct, viz. his omission in not anointing Hazael to be king of Syria, and Jehu king of Israel; and his cruelty in destroying the priests of Baal without a proper authority. Now, in answer to the former of these, it should be observed, that the words, *Go, and anoint*, may not be a positive command, but only a discretionary permission so to do. The prophet had been sorely complaining to God of the wickedness and idolatry of the Israelites, and of the bloody persecutions of their rulers: (s) *I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts*, says he; *for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, and thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away*: Whereupon God (after having shewn him, (t) by some symbolical representation, how able he was to avenge him of his adversaries) bids him go, and anoint such and such persons to be kings; as if he had said, (u) "Thou desirest of me, that I should destroy the idolaters of Israel, and such as have a design upon thy life; but in order to that, thou hast nothing to do, but to go, and appoint two other persons to be kings over Israel and Syria, and they will avenge both thy quarrel and mine." (x) But, allowing the words to be a positive command, we may suppose, that when Elijah, by his prophetic spirit, perceived what a grievous destruction the exaltation

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ann. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end.
of 2 Chron.

Why Elijah
did not a-
noint Jehu
and Hazael.

(r) Ad adventum tuum, militibus suis Christus duplicavit annonam; Hieronym. De vita Pauli. (s) 1 Kings xix. 10. (t) Ibid. ver. 11, 12, 13. (u) Le Clerc's Commentary on 1 Kings xix. 15. (x) Ibid.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

of these two persons to the thrones of Israel and Syria would bring upon his native country, he petitioned God to delay the execution of this his order, at least, for some time, and obtained his request. This indeed is a circumstance that we do not meet with in Scripture; but in so short an history, as this of the Hebrews is, we may well be allowed to supply some things that seem to be omitted; when this may be done without offering any violence to the words of the text, and especially when there is an analogy, in other parts of the history, to bear us out.

Now, in relation to one of these, *viz.* Hazael, who was afterwards king of Syria, it is said, that, when he came to inquire of Elisha concerning his master Benhadad's sickness, the prophet (*y*) *settled his countenance upon him steadfastly, and wept*; whereupon Hazael said, *Why weepeth my Lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel. Their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child*: And from this passage we have some grounds to think, that Elijah; upon the like prospect of his nation's calamities, might desire of God; if not a revocation of his command, at least a delay in the execution of it; and that this was the reason why neither of these kings were anointed by him.

Why Baal's
priests ac-
cepted Eli-
jah's chal-
lenge;

What notions the worshippers of Baal might have of the power of their god, we cannot tell; but, as sending down fire from heaven (*z*) was not above the reach of evil spirits, and some lying traditions might perhaps have descended to them concerning the exploits of their Baal in particular, (*a*) who, as he was thought to be the sun, and to exceed all heavenly bodies in heat, might, upon this grand occasion, as they thought, exert his power, and burn up their sacrifice, they held it the wisest way to accept of the prophet's challenge. The prophet's challenge indeed was upon such fair terms, that (whatever notions they might have of their god) they must have forfeited all their credit with the people, had they pretended to decline it: And therefore, rather than do this, they chose to venture all upon the hazard of an after-game, hoping that either they might have an opportunity of conveying fire among the wood clandestinely, or that Elijah would fail in his at-

(*y*) 2 Kings viii. 11, 12. (*z*) Job i. 16. (*a*) Patrick's Commentary on 1 Kings xviii. 26.

tempt,

tempt, as well as they, and so both stand upon equal ground; or that, if he succeeded, the thing might not be done so cleverly, but that there might be room for some cavils and exceptions to be raised against it.

Upon these presumptions, they might enter the lists; and, when they were so shamefully defeated, the prophet, (b) as an extraordinary minister of God's vengeance upon sinners, (especially when the magistrate so grossly neglected his duty), had sufficient authority to execute (c) the sentence of death passed upon them by the Lord of life and death, as perverters of the law, and teachers of idolatry; as authors of cruelty, and inciters of Jezebel (d) to murder the prophets of the Lord; and as cheats and impostors, to whose execution the people concurred, their princes gave their consent, and their king (as astonished at the late stupendous miracle) could make no opposition.

Whether Ahab's repentance, upon the commination of God's judgments, was sincere or superficial only, has been a matter of some debate among divines. It is certain that, in consideration of it, God revoked, at least in part, the sentence which he had denounced against him, and transferred it upon his posterity. And (e) yet we do not find him producing any *fruits meet for repentance*; either renouncing his superstitions, or destroying his idols, or restoring Naboth's vineyard, or re-establishing the true worship of God. Struck with the prophet's menaces, and dreading the effects of his predictions, he put on the garb of a penitent; he wept, he sighed, he fasted, and bemoaned himself: But how came God, who inspects the hearts, and cannot be taken with external shew, to have any respect to this? Such esteem has he (according to some) for true repentance and reformation, that he was willing to reward the very appearance of it. But this is an answer that comports not so well with the purity and holiness of God: And therefore we should rather chuse to say, that Ahab's repentance at this time was true, though imperfect; and his sorrow sincere, though of no long continuance; and that, had he persisted in the good resolutions he had then taken up, God would have remitted him, not only the temporal, but the eternal punishment likewise that was due to his sin. In the mean time, this instance of the divine lenity is left

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end.
of 2 Chron.
and why he
might order
them to be
slain.

Why God
regarded
Ahab's re-
pentance.

(b) Pool's Annotations on 1 Kings xviii. 40. (c) Deut. xiii. 6, 9—xiii. 2, 7. (d) 1 Kings xviii. 4. (e) Calmet's Commentary.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

Why he cut
off Hiel's
children for
their fa-
ther's sin.

upon record to encourage the first essays of our repentance, and to give us assurance of this, — That our good and gracious God, (*f*) *who keepeth mercy for thousands, and forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin,* (*g*) *will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, but bring forth judgment unto truth.*

But the same God who professes himself the forgiver of transgression and sin, declares withal, that (*h*) *he will not clear the guilty, but visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.* In the case of Hiel, that impious rebuilder of Jericho, God was obliged, in order to fulfil the prophecy, to transfer the punishment due to the father upon his sons, because the form of Joshua's malediction is, (*i*) *Cursed be the man before the Lord, that raiseth up, and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.* And as this malediction was kept upon record, and a thing well known, the people would have had but a slender conception of God's justice, or rather the judgment would have passed without observation, had Hiel alone (whose death might have been imputed to his old age) been cut off in the course of his building this city. But now, by taking his children, one after another, as the building advanced, the hand of God was visible, the denunciation of his servant verified, and a proper caution given to the whole nation, not to despise his patience and long-suffering, because they could not but see, that, upon their persisting in their impenitence, all his threats and comminations would, sooner or later, most certainly come to pass.

Hiel himself, indeed, is not concerned in the prophecy; and therefore no mention is made in Scripture of what fate befel him. But, from the impartiality of God's justice, we have reason to suppose, (*k*) that, after he had lived to be an eye-witness of his children's untimely death, himself was cut off by some sore judgment; or that, if he escaped, his present impunity was his greatest misery, forasmuch as it continued his torment in the sad and lasting remembrance of his sons that were lost through his folly; or else was a means to harden his heart for the infliction of such greater punishments as God had reserved for him.

(*f*) Exod. xxxiv. 7. (*g*) Isaiah xlii. 3. (*h*) Exod. xxxiv. 7. (*i*) Josh. vi. 26. (*k*) Pool's Annotations.

It is certainly an argument either of gross ignorance or of a very corrupt and depraved mind, to make the concessions of Scripture as matter of exception against it, and to find fault with the sacred penman, because he endeavours, by apt allusions and representations, to bring down spiritual and divine things to the measure of our mean and shallow capacities.

(l) The Jews conceived of God in heaven, as of a king seated on his throne; and that good and bad angels, the one standing on his right hand, and the other on his left, were the appointed executioners of his orders, either to reward or punish his subjects. And as princes upon earth do generally nothing of moment without advising with their council, and chief officers; so the prophet represents Almighty God, as deliberating with his heavenly courtiers what course he had best to take, in order to bring Ahab to destruction. Amidst this consultation, some suggest one expedient, and some another; but none takes with God until a lying spirit steps out and offers his service, which God, after some examination into his abilities, accepts.

But now, no man, I think, can have such a crude conception of the Divine Providence, as to think, that this is the method of God's governing the world; that he, who is the fountain of all power and wisdom, needs to advise with any of his creatures, nor can be at a loss for any expedient to accomplish his ends; or that he, who is both truth and holiness itself, should ever send a lying spirit among his prophets, which would be to confound all inspiration, and to make the imputation of error redound upon himself.

(m) Upon the whole, then, we cannot but infer, that the speech of Micaiah was no more than a parabolical representation of a certain event which not long after came to pass; that several of the circumstances which are thrown into it are, in a great measure, ornamental, and designed only to illustrate the narration; and that therefore they are not to be taken in a literal sense, but in such a manner as other parables are, where the end and design of the speaker is chiefly to be considered; which, in Micaiah's case, was to show the reason why so many of the prophets declared what was false upon this occasion; even because they were

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Chris.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.
Micaiah's
speech not
to be taken
in a literal,
but parabo-
lical sense.

(l) Calmet's Commentary. (m) Le Clerc's Commentary.

moved,

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Chriſt.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end.
of 2 Chron.

Why the
prophet was
ſlain for not
ſmiting his
brother-
prophet.

moved, not by the Spirit of truth, but that of adulation. The prophets indeed, both in their parabolical ſpeeches and ſymbolical actions, are to be conſidered as perſons of a ſingular character. For as we find (*n*) one of them tearing his own garment to pieces, to ſignify to Jeroboam the alienation of the major part of the kingdom from the houſe of Solomon; ſo here we have another deſiring his companion (for ſo what we render *neighbour* ſignifies) to give him a wound, (*o*) that thereby he might have the better opportunity of reprov- ing Ahab for his ill-timed clemency to Benhadad.

The princes of the eaſt were very difficult of acceſs; and in the court of Ahab, in particular, the character of a prophet was held in ſo great deteſtation, that ſome expedient was to be found out to gain him admittance to the king's preſence, and an opportunity to ſpeak to him in the manner he deſigned. After ſo great a victory as Ahab had lately won by the valour of his men, it may be preſumed, that the name of a ſoldier was become in high eſteem, and therefore to perſonate a ſoldier, and a wounded ſoldier like- wiſe, who might more engage the king's pity and attention, the prophet intreats his fellow-collegiate (having firſt told him his intent) to give him a ſlight cut with a ſword, or ſome other inſtrument, that thereby he might be enabled to act his part better.

To deſire to have his own fleſh ſlaſhed and cut, was, in appearance, a requeſt ſo frantic, that juſtly might his brother prophet have denied him that courteſy, had he not been ſatisfied that the requeſt came from God: But herein lay the great fault of the reſuſant: Though he knew the authority of God's commands, and that this was the very thing which he enjoined, yet, out of an indiſcreet pity and compaſſion to his brother, he reſuſed to comply. (*p*) Had he been a ſtranger indeed to the ſeveral methods of divine prophecy, he might have excuſed himſelf with a better grace; but as he was equally a prophet bred up in the ſame ſchool with the other, had been informed by the other of his whole deſign, and well underſtood the weight of theſe words, (*q*) *I command thee in the name of the Lord*, he was utterly inexcusable; becauſe diſobedience to a divine com-

(*n*) 1 Kings xi. 30, 31. (*o*) 1 Kings xx. 35. (*p*) Pool's Annotations. (*q*) 1 Kings xx. 35.

mand, and especially when delivered by a prophet, was, (r) by the construction of the law, held capital.

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Now, there were two ways (according to the Jewish doctors) wherein the prophets of old were punished for their offences in their office. Those (s) who prophesied in the name of idols, or prophesied falsehoods in God's name, were put to death by the judges; but those who either concealed or rejected a true prophecy, were to die by the hand of God. And in the case now before us, the divine justice might be more disposed to mark what was done amiss, for this reason, (among others to us unknown), that by the severity of this punishment of a prophet's disobedience, proceeding from pity to his brother-prophet, he might teach Ahab the greatness of his sin, in sparing him (through a foolish generosity or compassion) whom, by the laws of religion, and justice, and prudence, and self-preservation, he should have cut off, and consequently what punishment he might reasonably expect for his disobedience.

In the account which the Scripture gives us of Jehoshaphat's reformation, it is said, that he not only (t) *took away the high places and groves, but sent to his princes to teach the cities of Judah, and with them sent Levites, who had the book of the law with them, and went through all the cities of Judah, teaching the people.* But what the proper business of these princes, in their circuit round the kingdom, was, is a matter of some dispute among the learned. Grotius (u) is of opinion, that their commission extended to the instruction of the people, which, in cases extraordinary, is every one's business, and could never be done with more probability of success, than by persons who were of the king's council, and invested with his authority. There is reason to think, however, that they did not act in the very same capacity with the priests and Levites that attended them; but that (x) as judges and justices of peace among us, teach and instruct the people in the laws of the land, when they deliver their charges from the bench; so these great men, in the king's name, did only admonish and require the people to observe the laws of God, which were the municipal laws of the land, and left the particular ex-

Why Jehoshaphat appointed itinerant preachers, and who they were.

(r) Deut. xviii. 19. (s) Ibid. xviii. 20. (t) 2 Chron. xvii. 6.
(u) In locum. (x) Pool's Annotations, on ver. 7.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
2 Kings viii.
to the end.
of 2 Chron.

plication and enforcement of them to those of the sacred order, who went along with them ; supporting them, in the mean time, in the execution of their office, and obliging the people to receive them with respect, to hear them with attention, and to practise what they taught them.

However this be, it is obvious from the sense of the words, that, in those days, there was a great (y) *famine in the land*, (as the prophet expresses it), *not a famine of bread, or a thirst of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord*. There were then no such public synagogues and public teachers as were afterwards instituted in the kingdom, for the instruction of the people in the sense of the law ; for then there would have been no occasion for these commissioners and Levites to have gone about throughout all the cities of Judah ; and into such a wretched state of ignorance was the generality of the people fallen, that there was scarce one copy of the law to be found in the whole country ; for which reason it was thought adviseable, and necessary indeed, to carry one with them.

The truth is, the synagogues whereof we read so much in the Acts of our Saviour and his Apostles, as places appointed for the public instruction of the people, were not of so early an institution as the times we are now speaking of. (z) They did not obtain universally till after the time of the Maccabees ; and it is to no later date than this that the words of St. James allude, (a) *Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day*. Upon the whole, therefore, we may infer,——That if proper places for religious instruction were not as yet instituted ; if the Levites and others whose stated business it was to instruct the people, were become grossly negligent in their duty ; and the people withal were grown so obstinate in their ignorance, as to want a proper authority to compel them to listen to their instructors ; then was this commission which Jehoshaphat gave to persons duly qualified to execute it, far from being needless or supererogant, but such only as become a pious prince, whose chief ambition was, that (b) *the earth should be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea*.

(y) Amos viii. 11. (z) Calmet's Dictionary, under the word *synagogue*. (a) Acts xv. 21. (b) Isaiah xi. 9.

For this reason, no doubt, it is, that the sacred historian has remarked (as a reward of this prince's piety) that *(c)* *he had not only riches and honours in abundance, but a more numerous people, and a larger military force, (in proportion to his territories), than any of his most powerful predecessors.* The whole amount of the particulars indeed is so very great, *(d)* that some have suspected a mistake in the transcribers; but when it is considered, that the dominions of the kingdom of Judah under Jehoshaphat were not confined to the narrow limits of Judah and Benjamin, only, but *(e)* reached into the tribes of Dan, Ephraim, and Simeon; into Arabia, and the country of the Philistines; in a word, from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim, one way, and from Jordan to the Mediterranean sea, the other; when it is considered that this kingdom received a vast accession, when Jeroboam thrust out the priests and Levites from officiating in the service of the Lord, and multitudes of other piously disposed persons followed them from all parts of Israel, when they found that they might be encouraged in worshipping God at Jerusalem; when it is considered, that this country was exceedingly well cultivated, flourishing in commerce, abounding with foreigners, and what a vast increase of inhabitants in any nation may be produced in the space of an hundred years, which was the very period from David; and when it is considered farther, that soldiers in these days were not kept, like our standing armies, in constant pay and duty, but only had their names set down in the king's muster-rolls, in order to be summoned to arms whenever there was occasion, and so returned to their families, and followed their usual occupations: When all this is considered, and put together, I say, we shall not find the number of twelve hundred thousand fighting men (even though they may include six millions of persons of all ages and conditions) to be so very extravagant; especially, when it is remembered, that the city of Thebes alone (as it is reported by *(f)* Tacitus) furnished no less than seven hundred thousand soldiers; that, in ancient Rome, there were once between three and four millions of souls; and that, in Grand Cairo (as some travellers report) there is now almost twice that number.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.
Why Jeho-
shaphat's
subjects
were so ma-
ny, and ar-
my so large.

(c) 2 Chron. xviii. 1. *(d)* Le Clerc's Commentary on Ibid. xvii. 14. *(e)* Calmet's, Ibid. *(f)* Annals, lib. 2.

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

How the
walls of A-
phek fall-
ing might
kill and
maim so
many.

We have but one seeming paradox more to account for, and that is the fall (g) of the walls of Aphek upon no less than seven and twenty thousand men. But, in answer to this, (h) we are not to suppose, that this wall or castle, or fort, (as it may be rendered), fell upon every individual one, much less, that it killed every man it fell on: It is sufficient to justify the expression, that it fell upon the main body of these seven and twenty thousand, and that it killed some, and maimed others, (for the Scripture does not say, that it killed all), as is usual in such cases. Let us suppose, then, that these Syrians, after their defeat from the plains of Aphek, betook themselves to this fenced city, and, despairing of any quarter, mounted the walls, or retired into some castle, with a resolution, to defend themselves to the last; and that the Israelitish army coming upon them, plied the walls, or the castle, on every side, so warmly with their batteries, that down they came at once, and killing some, wounding others, and making the rest disperse for fear, did all the execution that the text intends.

Thus we may account for this event in a natural way; but it is more reasonable to think, that God, upon this occasion, wrought a miracle; and, either by some sudden earthquake, or violent storm of wind, overturned these walls, or this fortress, upon the Syrians. And indeed, if any time was proper for his almighty arm to interpose, (i) it was at such a time as this, when these blasphemous people had denied his sovereign power and authority in the government of the world, and thereby, in some measure, obliged him, in vindication of his own honour, to give them a full demonstration of it, and to shew, that he was the (k) God of the plains, as well as of the mountains; that he could as effectually destroy them in strong holds, as in the open field, and make the very walls, wherein they trusted for defence, the instruments of their ruin.

(g) 1 Kings xx. 30.
(i) Pool, Ibid.

(h) Pool's Annotations in locum.
(k) 1 Kings xx. 23.

DISSERTATION II.

Of the Translation of Enoch and Elijah.

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.
The reality
of Enoch's
translation.

OF all the events recorded in Scripture, we meet with none that require our attention more, than the translation of the patriarch Enoch, in the times before the flood, and the assumption of the prophet Elijah, under the dispensation of the law: For, whether Moses, the great minister of that dispensation, was in like manner exempted from the common fate of mortals, is a matter wherein commentators are not so well agreed. The account of Elijah's translation is so express and circumstantiated, that no question can be made of its reality: But the ambiguity of the words wherein the sacred historian has related the assumption of Enoch, has induced several to think, that though this antediluvian patriarch was highly in favour with God, and for that reason removed from the contagious wickedness which was then overspreading the earth; yet that this removal was effected, not by any miraculous operation of God, but merely by his undergoing a natural death.

The words wherein Moses has recorded this transaction, are very few, and these of uncertain signification: Arguments against it.

(1) *Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.* Now it is plain, from several passages in Scripture, not only that the word, which we render *God took him*, is set to signify our common death, as in the case of Elijah himself, when under the juniper-tree, he prays, that God would (m) *take away his life*, because he was not better than his fathers: and in that of holy Job, when he tells us, that he did not know how soon (n) *his maker might take him away*; but that the other expression, *he was not*, is frequently used in the same sense, as is evident from the lamentation which both Jacob and his son Reuben made, for the supposed loss of Joseph: (o) *Joseph is not, and Simeon is not*, says the old man; and (p) *the child is not*; and I, *whither shall I go?* says his son. So that no argument can be drawn from the terms in the text to countenance a miracu-

(1) Gen. v. 24. (m) 1 Kings xix. 4. (n) Job. xxxii. 22. (o) Gen. xlii. 36. (p) Ibid. xxxvii. 30.

A. M. 3001, etc. Ant. Chris. 1003, &c. lous assumption, more than a natural death, in the prophet Enoch. But this is not all.

The author of the book, intituled, *the wisdom of Solomon*, is supposed to carry the matter farther, and to declare positively for the death of this patriarch, when he tells us, *(q) that he pleased God, and was beloved of him, so that living among sinners, he was translated; yea, speedily was he taken away, lest wickedness should alter his understanding, and deceit beguile his soul. Being made perfect in a short time, he fulfilled a long time; for his soul pleased the Lord, therefore hastened he to take him away from among the wicked.* Where every line in the description (as some imagine) suits exactly with Enoch, and yet the author all along supposes, that the person he is here speaking of died in the same manner as other men do.

Arguments
for it

(r) We acknowledge indeed, that the author of the book of *Wisdom*, speaking of the hasty and premature death of the righteous, might properly enough allude to what Moses relates concerning the translation of Enoch, who, in comparison of his contemporary patriarchs, lived but a short time; but we have no reason at all to suppose, that he is here directly treating of the death of Enoch: On the contrary, that he is here discoursing of the righteous in general, and vindicating the wisdom and goodness of Providence, in taking them sometimes sooner than ordinary out of this wicked world, is evident from the inference wherewith he concludes his discourse: *(s) Thus the righteous that is dead, shall condemn the ungodly that is living, and youth, that is soon perfected, the old age of the unrighteous: For they shall see the age of the wise, and shall not understand what God in his council had decreed of him, and to what end the Lord hath set him in safety.*

We acknowledge again, that, according to the light which the gospel has introduced, for a good man to die at any time (t) is gain, and to be removed from the miseries of this life is much better than the longest continuance in it: (u) but still it must be confessed, that, in the first ages of the world, and under a less perfect dispensation, length of days was generally accounted the recompence of virtue: And therefore, if there were nothing extraordinary in the manner of Enoch's departure, the other

(q) *Wisdom* iv. 10. &c. (r) Calmet's Dissert. sur le Patriarche Henoch. (s) *Wisd.* iv. 16, 17. (t) *Phil.* i. 21, 22. (u) Saurin's Dissert. sur l'enlèvement d' Enoch.

patriarchs,

patriarchs, who so far exceeded him in years, seem to have been more immediately under the divine favour than him, who, though more remarkable than any for his piety and goodness, fell under the lot and condemnation of the wicked, as being not permitted (x) *to live out half his days*.

A. M.
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1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

We acknowledge, once more, that the words of Moses do not necessarily imply any miraculous assumption of a living man into heaven, or any other place unknown, and unaccessible to mortals: But still, if we will but compare what he says of Enoch with what he relates of the other patriarchs, we shall soon perceive, that his purpose was to distinguish between their manner of leaving the world and his. For whereas it is said of all the preceding patriarchs, that they lived to such and such a number of years, and (y) *begat sons and daughters, and so died*; of Enoch it is said, that (z) *he lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah*; that, after he begat Methuselah, *he lived three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters*; but then, instead of *he died*, the author's words are, *he walked with God, and was not, for God took him*: Where he first takes notice of his good and pious life, which made him so acceptable to God, and then of his translation, *God took him*; but lest there should be any ambiguity in that expression, he adds, *and he was not*, or appeared no more in the world; whereby he intimates, that he still lives, and subsists in some other place.

The truth is, these expressions in the text (when rightly understood) do confirm, rather than invalidate, the doctrine of Enoch's translation: But to put the matter beyond all dispute, we have the authority of an apostle, enumerating the actions of the worthies of old, and telling us of this patriarch in particular, that (a) *by faith he was translated, that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him*: For, before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God: Where the author to the Hebrews takes care, by repeating the word three times, to prevent our mistaking his meaning; and by telling us, that the patriarch was not found, he plainly alludes to what the sons of the prophets did, when Elijah was taken away, i. e. sent (b) fifty men in quest of him, but found him not; and consequently not obscurely intimates, that

(x) Psal. lv. 25.
(a) Heb. xi. 5.

(y) Gen. v. 5. &c.
(b) 2 Kings ii. 16.

(z) Ver. 21. &c.

A. M.
3001, etc.
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of 2 Chron.

Of the
place whi
ther Enoch,
and Elijah
were trans-
lated, sever-
al opi-
nions.

this transport of the patriarch was of the same nature with what happened to the prophet so many years after; that they were both the effect of the divine favour to them, both the reward of their services upon earth, and both a remove to some certain place that is beyond the reach of the knowledge of man.

In what part of the world this place is, we should not be too inquisitive, much less too positive, because we have no foundation, but conjecture, to go upon. (c) St. Austin, who seems to be more reserved in other abstruse questions, is very peremptory in this, ——— That Enoch and Elijah were translated into that † terrestrial paradise where Adam and Eve lived, in their state of innocence; that there they are nourished by the fruit of the tree of life, which gives them a power of subsisting for ever, without submitting to the necessity of death; that there they enjoy all the blessings and privileges that our first parents had before their transgression; and, among other things, an exemption from sinning, by the supernatural grace of God. But then the question is, where we are to place this terrestrial paradise, since there is scarce one region in the world, that one author or other has not made choice of for its situation; and since, by the violent concussions which happened at Noah's flood, the face of nature had been so changed, that those very places, which, according to their description in Scripture, seem once to bid fairest for it, are now debased to such a degree, as little to deserve the appellation of the gardens of pleasure, much less the abodes of the blessed.

(d) The word *Schamajim*, which we render *Heaven*, is supposed by several, both Jewish and Christian doctors, to be the upper part of the air, where the spirits of just men departed, together with these two translated persons,

(c) Contra Julian. lib. 6. c. 30.

† Whether the Mahometans embrace the same opinion, it is a little uncertain; but they have a tradition among them, of one Khe-der or Khizin, who had the good fortune to find the fountain of life, whereof he drank plentifully, and so become immortal. This Khe-der, whose name signifies *verdant* or *everflourishing*, according to them, is the same with Elijah, who lives in a place of retirement, in a delicious garden where the fountain of life runs, and the tree of life, which preserves his immortality, grows; *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Elijah*.

(d) Le Clerc's Commentary on 2 Kings ii. 11.

live in a state of sincere, but imperfect bliss, until the general resurrection. But this, in our opinion, is placing the seats of the blessed too near the confines (e) of the prince of the power of that element, and in danger of being disturbed by some incursions from his quarters: And therefore (if we might be indulged a farther conjecture) (f) we should rather chuse to place them beyond the circumference of the solar system, where there are immense spaces, neither obstructed by the motion of any planets, nor obnoxious to the changes of their atmospheres, because nothing is there but pure æther. But how our corporeal part shall be enabled to live here, and to live to all eternity, we shall then come to understand, when by experience we shall know what that change is which the body undergoes, when it puts on immortality. In the mean time, as God is omnipotent, nothing can hinder him from making what changes he pleases in our bodies, and from preserving them eternally in that state.

A. M.
3001, etc.
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This we may call the Celestial Paradise, into which our blessed Saviour promised the penitent thief upon the cross a joyful admittance; and, having taken him with him, and reposed his soul in this mansion of rest and happiness, proceeded in his ascent beyond the orbits of the most distant stars, and made his entrance into the highest heavens, which are the residence of God himself; and into which (as others imagine) this patriarch and prophet were, upon their translation, carried.

(g) *I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, says St. Paul, speaking of himself, though his modesty made him conceal it, (whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth), such an one caught up to the third heaven; and I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, God knoweth), how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard things unspeakable, which it is not possible for man to utter: And if St. Paul was caught up into the third heaven, even while he continued in this mortal state, why may we not suppose, that Enoch and Elijah were at once translated into the same place? The probable design of God's vouchsafing the apostle this vision of heaven, was to show him what his final reward would be, and consequently, for the crown of joy that was set before him, to make him (h) glory in*

(e) Ephes. ii. 2. (f) Le Clerc, ibid.. (g) 2 Cor. xii. 2. &c.
(h) Gal. vi. 14.

A. M.
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Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
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the cross of Christ, (i) in tribulation, in distress, in persecution; and how reasonable it is to believe, that these two worthies, who in their several generations, had (k) fought the good fight, and finished their course, and kept the faith, should, upon the peculiar favour of their assumption into heaven, be admitted to a nearer participation of the beatific vision, as an ample reward for the fatigues of their warfare?

At our Saviour's transfiguration upon the mount, we find one of these sent to him (as we may presume) upon some important message, appearing in a bright and glorious form, and (as if he were admitted to the counsels of heaven) *(l) talking with him of his decease, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem: And therefore we can hardly think, that his abode could be at any wide distance from the throne of God's presence, who, in conjunction with his faithful servant and lawgiver, Moses, was deputed to go on an embassy to his (m) beloved Son. But in this point, we ought to repress our curiosity, and in the sense of (n) Theodoret, content ourselves with what God has been pleased to reveal in Scripture, without inquiring too curiously into what he hath thought fit to conceal.*

The manner in which they were translated.

In what manner Enoch was translated into heaven, we have not the least intimation, nor is the account of Elijah's ascension to be taken in a literal sense; since a fiery chariot and horses would not have been a vehicle so proper for a nature as yet not impregnated with immortality. The notion of those who, upon this occasion, make angels assume the form of the chariot and horses, is not so incongruous, because we need not doubt, but that, by the divine permission, they can transform themselves into any shape. They are supposed to have frequently appeared in the figure of flying oxen, for which reason they have obtained the name of *Cherub*, or *Cherubim*: And with the same facility, they might at this time have put on the appearance of horses; but, in points not so clearly expressed, we are to resolve God's method of acting by those that are analogous, and yet more plain.

Now the only ascension that we read of, besides these, is that of our blessed Saviour; and the manner in which he is said to have been carried up, was by the subvention of a

(i) Rom. viii. 35. (k) 2 Tim. iv. 7. (l) Luke ix. 31.
(m) Ver. 35. (n) Quest. 45. in Genes.

cloud, which raised him from the ground, and mounting with him gradually, (o) *carried him out of his apostles sight*; and in like manner, we may suppose, that the translation of these two was performed, viz. that a bright and radiant cloud, (which, as it ascended, might appear like a chariot and horses) raised them from the earth, and leaving this little globe behind, wafted them into the seas of the blessed. Only we must observe, that Christ's body was at this time invested with the powers of spirituality, and therefore capable of ascending without any vehicle; whereas theirs were retarded with a load of matter: And therefore it is reasonable to think, that by the ministry of angels, or rather by the power of God, the cloud which carried them up, was condensed to a more than common consistency, and that the whirlwind which might be raised for this purpose, helped to accelerate its motion, and expedite their ascent.

"But since (p) *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption*; the question is, How these persons were all on a sudden, (q) *made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*?" Behold, I shew you a mystery, says St. Paul, speaking of those who shall be alive at our Saviour's second advent, *we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump*; and therefore the same almighty power, which, at the sounding of the last trump, will make our corruptible natures put on incorruption, and our mortal put on immortality, did, no doubt, in their passage, change their terrestrial into celestial bodies, and thereby convey into them such faculties as were requisite for the enjoyment of the place whereunto it was conducting them.

What particular services Enoch had done God, for which he vouchsafed him this favour extraordinary, and an exemption from mortality, the Scripture has no where specified. It tells us only, that *he walked with God*; but then, considering that (if not then, at least in a short time) (r) *all flesh had corrupted their ways*, and that, *when God saw the wickedness of the earth, it repented him that he had made man*; we may suppose, that this good and pious

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Chrif.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.

And their
change

For what
ends they
were trans-
lated.

(o) Acts i. 9. (p) 1 Cor. xv. 50. (q) Colos. i. 12.
(r) Gen. vi. 11, 6.

A. M.
3001, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1003, &c.
from
1 Kings viii.
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patriarch took care not only of his conduct, but set himself in opposition likewise to the violence, and other kinds of iniquity, which began then to prevail in most places; and that, in short, he was (as the tradition goes) a preacher of righteousness, in which office Noah is said to have succeeded him. For that he was a preacher of righteousness is manifest from that commination of his, which St. Jude (from some ancient record or other) brings him in making to the antediluvian world: (*s*) *Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed, and of all the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*

And, in like manner, it is very evident, that Elijah was a zealous advocate for God, and a strenuous opposer of idolatry, an implacable enemy to Baal's priests, an undaunted reprover of the wickedness of princes; and a severe inflicter of the divine vengeance upon all the children of disobedience: And therefore, we may presume, that God designed his exaltation, not only as a recompence for his past services, which were great, but as an encouragement likewise to other remaining prophets, *to be strong in the Lord*; to bear witness boldly against the corruption of the age wherein they lived; and in the execution of their office, to fear the face of no man.

The corruption of the age indeed, both in the times of Enoch and Elijah, was become so great and general, that the belief of a future state (we may well suppose) was in a manner quite extinct among them; and therefore God might think it expedient, at these two periods of time, to give the world a sensible proof of it, if not to convince the unbelieving part, at least, to excite in the hearts of the faithful, under all their afflictions and persecutions for righteousness sake, refreshing hopes and expectations of a *recompence to be made them in due time*. Nor can we think, but that, in these instances, God might have a prospect to a greater event, and by the assumption of his two faithful servants, intend to typify the ascension of his Son, who was to *destroy death, and open the kingdom of heaven to all believers*; that thereby he might make the testimony of his apostles concerning this fact a thing more credible; and give all good Christians a more solid comfort and

(*s*) Jude, ver. 14, 15.

consolation

consolation in those words of St. Paul, (t) *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

The testimony of the angels concerning our blessed Saviour is, — (u) *This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven: But, before this his second coming, it is an opinion that has prevailed much among the ancient fathers, (x) that God in his great mercy will send Enoch and Elijah, to oppose the proceedings of Antichrist, to refute his doctrines, and to fortify the righteous against his threats and cruelties; but that, by the management of this their adversary, they shall be put to death, though in a short time raised again to everlasting life and glory. The whole of this notion is founded upon a very abstruse passage in St. John's Revelation, concerning the two witnesses, which are variously interpreted. For, besides Enoch and Elijah, (as we said before), some apply them to the law and the prophets, others to the Old and New Testament, and others again (especially those who favour the millenary scheme) to our Saviour Christ, and his forerunner, John the Baptist. But as every one is left to his liberty to chuse what part he pleases in such problems as these, we shall (without pretending to determine any thing ourselves) leave the passage (which, in a great measure, we account inexplicable) to the examination of the more learned and sagacious. — (y) *I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand**

A. M.
3001, etc.
Ant. Christ.
1003, etc.
from
1 Kings viii.
to the end
of 2 Chron.
And whether they
are to return.

(t) Rom. viii. 33, 34. (u) Acts i. 11. (x) Calmet's Dissert. sur le Patriarch Henoch, &c.

(y) Rev. xi. 3. &c. The learned Calmet (from whom in a great measure I have extracted this dissertation) concludes his discourse in such words as these. — 1. That though we cannot infer, from the strict words of Moses, that Enoch was translated alive into another world, and is still living; yet nevertheless ought the authorities of St. Paul, and the tradition of the church, to prevail with us, to esteem this opinion as a matter of faith. 2. Although the fathers and interpreters seem to differ about the place into which Enoch was translated, yet if we examine carefully their different opinions, the greatest part of them may be reduced to a declaration of his being in paradise, which some place on the earth, and others in heaven. And, 3. That whatever liberty the church may

A. M.
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thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth; and if a man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies. — They have power to shut heaven that it rain not, in the days of their prophecy, and have power over waters, to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and overcome them, and kill them, and their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. — Their bodies shall lie three days and an half without being buried, and the people shall rejoice and make merry, because of their death; but after three days and an half, the spirit of life from God shall enter into them, and they shall stand on their feet, and great fear shall fall upon them that see them.

may allow interpreters, of putting a sense on the passage quoted out of the Revelations, which speaks of the coming of two witnesses that are to appear in the latter ages, it must be agreed, that the opinion which explains it of the return of Enoch and Elijah upon the earth, is much preferable to any other, on account of its antiquity, its intrinsic justness, and the number of authors who maintain it.

The End of the THIRD VOLUME.

